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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for developing literacy skills in order to reduce the number of at-risk students in the identified primary classrooms. The targeted population consisted of students in kindergarten, second, and fourth grades. The kindergarten and second grade classrooms were located in a middle to high socioeconomic area within an urban community of Illinois. The fourth grade classroom was located in a lower socioeconomic area within the same community. The problem of inadequately developed literacy skills was documented through data compiled by the teacher-researchers: literacy skills and sight word checklists, anecdotal records, and student assessments. Probable causes for the problem included not only social factors such as lack of prior language experiences and poverty, but also various school structure and curriculum issues. A need for a literacy-rich educational environment in the targeted classrooms was revealed. A review of various strategies utilized with at-risk students combined with an analysis of the targeted settings, resulted in the selection of a five-pronged intervention. The intervention consisted of (1) students were actively engaged in real world reading and writing activities; (2) the teacher explained, demonstrated, and supported reading strategies with the students; (3) the teacher described, modeled, and supported writing strategies with the students; (4) the teacher presented strategies to assist students in spelling and decoding words; and (5) the teacher expanded students' word and world knowledge through various instructional activities. The process when woven together created a "High Quality Classroom" (Cunningham & Allington, 1999) at each site. Improvements were exhibited in the areas of letter recognition, sight word knowledge, oral reading skills, reading comprehension and writing skills. An additional benefit observed was the students' increased level of motivation and confidence. (Contains 39 references, and 5 tables and 12 figures of data; appendixes contain worksheets, checklists, sample activities, and word lists.) (Author/RS)

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PROVIDING A LITERACY-RICH ENVIRONMENT FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS

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An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

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ABSTRACT

The report describes a program for developing literacy skills in order to reduce the number of at-risk students in the identified primary classrooms. The targeted population consisted of students in kindergarten, second, and fourth grades. The kindergarten and second grade classrooms were located in a middle to high socioeconomic area within an urban community of Illinois. The fourth grade classroom was located in a lower socioeconomic area within the same community.

The problem of inadequately developed literacy skills was documented through data compiled by the teacher-researchers: literacy skills and sight word checklists, anecdotal records, and student assessments.

Probable causes for the problem included not only social factors such as lack of prior language experiences and poverty, but also various school structure and curriculum issues. A need for a literacy-rich educational environment in the targeted classrooms was revealed.

A review of various strategies utilized with at-risk students combined with an analysis of the targeted settings, resulted in the selection of a five-pronged intervention. The intervention consisted of:

1. Students were actively engaged in real world reading and writing activities.
2. The teacher explained, demonstrated, and supported reading strategies with the students.
3. The teacher described, modeled, and supported writing strategies with the students.
4. The teacher presented strategies to assist students in spelling and decoding words.
5. The teacher expanded students' word and world knowledge through various instructional activities.

The process when woven together created a "High Quality Classroom" (Cunningham & Allington, 1999) at each site. Improvements were exhibited in the areas of letter recognition, sight word knowledge, oral reading skills, reading comprehension and writing skills. An additional benefit observed was the students increased level of motivation and confidence.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted primary classrooms have inadequately developed literacy skills. This problem interferes with academic maintenance and growth. Evidence for the existence of the problem will consist of teacher anecdotal records that document students' current literacy strengths and weaknesses and checklists of literacy skills. Assessments that indicate students' literacy performance will also be included.

Immediate Problem Context

Site A

Site A consists of 637 students in grades pre-kindergarten-4. Of those students, 70% are Black, 27.5% are White, 1.7% are Hispanic, and 0.8% are Asian. The percentage of low-income students is 86.3%. These students come from families that receive public aid, live in foster homes which are supported with public funds, live in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, or are eligible for free or reduced lunch. The students are instructed in the areas of reading, language, math, social studies, and science, with specialized instruction given in physical education, music, art, library, and computers. This school has an attendance rate of 92.6% with 48.7% student mobility. The percentage of students chronically truant is 3.7%. Site A has 26

regular division and 5 special education certified teachers. The average teaching experience is 13.4 years and 42% of these teachers have a master's degree or above. The average class size of this school is 25.8 students. In the school, the parents of 79.1% of students made at least one contact with the students' teachers during the past school year.

Site B

Site B consists of 437 students in grades kindergarten-4. Of those students, 72.5% are White, 20.8% are Black, 0.9% are Hispanic, and 2.7% Asian. The percentage of low-income students is 24.5%. The attendance rate is 95.8% with 16.2% student mobility and no chronic truancies. The average class size for the school is 23.3 students. There are 25 teachers of whom 18 are regular division certified and 7 are special education certified. There is an average of 21 years experience with 50% of the teachers having attained their master's level of education. Instruction in reading, spelling, language, math, science, social science and art are offered in self-contained classrooms, with specialized instruction given in physical activity, music, library, and computers. In the school, the parents of 98.3% of students made at least one contact with the students' teachers during the past school year.

Site C

Site C consists of 670 students in grades pre-kindergarten-8. Of these students, 97.0% are White, 0.9% are Black, 1.3% are Hispanic, 0.6% are Asian, and 0.1% are Native American. The percentage of low-income students is 15.5%. The attendance rate is 96.1% with 10.9% student mobility and there are no chronic truants. Forty-five faculty members provide instruction to grades pre-kindergarten-8. In kindergarten-6, instruction is offered in reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and art in self-contained classrooms, with specialized instruction in physical education, library, and music. The parents of 94.9% of the students in Site C made at

least one contact with the students' teachers during the past school year. The average class size for Site C is 25.5 students. There are 7 teachers who are special education certified and 38 who are regular division certified. The average teaching experience is 18 years, with 28% of the teachers having attained a master's degree or above.

The Surrounding Community

Sites A and B

The district for sites A and B has an enrollment of 15,720 students in grades kindergarten-12. Of those students, 51.5% are Black, 44.8% are White, 1.9% are Hispanic, 1.8% are Asian, and 0.1% are Native American. The percentage of low-income students is 55.8%. This district has an attendance rate of 92.2% with a student mobility rate of 34.6%. The percentage of students chronically truant is 5.6%. District A has 1,015 full-time classroom teachers. The average years of teaching experience is 15.1 and 44.6% of these teachers have a master's degree or above. In this district 91.9% of the teachers are White, 7.4% are Black, 0.4% are Hispanic, and 0.3% are Asian. There are no Native American teachers. This district employs 76% female and 24% male teachers. The average class size in this district is 23.3 students. The parents of 91.3% of the students in this district made at least one contact with their child's teacher during the previous school year.

The population of the community surrounding sites A and B is 113,504. The median age of this population is 32.6 years. Of the households in the community, 45.8% are married-couple households, 14.7% are female-headed households with no husband present, and 36.8% are single person households. The community is 76.5% White, 20.9% Black, .2% Native American, 1.7% Asian, and .7% other race (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1992).

In this community, 87,101 persons are over 16 years of age and 60.7% of these persons are in the labor force. The percent of the civilian labor force that is unemployed is 7.0%. The occupations of the employed persons 16 years of age and over are: 31.3% managerial and professional specialty occupations, 33.8% technical, sales, and administrative support occupations, 15.5% service occupations, 0.5% farming, forestry, and fishing occupations, 7.2% precision production, craft, and repair occupations, 11.7% operators, fabricators, and laborers. The median household income in this community is $26,074 and the median family income is $34,003. The percent of families living below poverty level is 15.1% (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1993).

Community support of the schools is evident through the recent development of an educational task force, which consisted of 30 community representatives and 3 school board members. The community representatives included parents, teachers, principals, counselors, elected officials, activists, and agency directors. This task force convened five times within the 1997-1998 school year with the purpose of bringing recommendations before the school board and administration that would improve the educational experience for the students in this district. The task force requested the administration begin investigating the recommendations made, assigning time lines in which to report on their findings, and providing quarterly reports to all task force members (Auer, 1998).

Site C

Site C is part of a school district which operates four facilities and provides education for approximately 2,100 students in grades pre-kindergarten-12. The district is administered by a superintendent, is governed by an elected seven-member board of education, and employs a staff of 225 individuals, of which 127 are certified to teach. Population in the district is estimated at

15,000, and valuation is composed of a mix of agricultural, residential, and commercial/industrial properties.

The students in the district are 96.3% White, 0.5% Black, 2.0% Hispanic, 1.1% Asian, and 0.1% Native American. The percentage of low-income students is 16.3%. Attendance rate is 95.4%, student mobility rate is 11.5%, and chronic truancy is 0.4%. In the district, the parents of 84.2% of students made at least one contact with the students' teachers during the past school year. Teachers in the district are 99.1% White and 0.9% Hispanic. There are no Black, Asian, or Native American teachers. Teachers are 34.1% male and 65.9% female. The average teaching experience is 16.2 years with 34.1% of the teachers having a master's degree or above.

The population of the community surrounding site C is 5,959. The median age of this population is 35.7 years. Of the households in the community, 59% are married-couple households, 9.9% are female-headed households with no husband present, and 28.5% are single person households. The community is 98.1% White, 0.3% Black, 0.1% American Indian, 0.2% Asian, and 1.3% other race (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1992).

In this community, 4,506 persons are over 16 years of age and 62.1% of these persons are in the labor force. The percent of the civilian labor force that is unemployed is 4.5%. The occupations of the employed persons 16 years of age and over are: 24% managerial and professional specialty occupations, 29% technical, sales, and administrative support occupations, 15% service occupations, 1% farming, forestry, and fishing occupations, 8% precision production, craft, and repair occupations, 23% operators, fabricators, and laborers. The median household income in this community is $31,495 and the median family income is $37,442. The percent of families living below poverty level is 10.3% (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1993).

At site C there are 7 strategic planning teams operating to implement 32 action plans for improving the schools over the next 5 years. These teams are composed of teachers, parents, administrators, and other community members. The teams are involved with these topics: curriculum, restructuring, extra-curricular activities, marketing, technology, and at-risk. Primary goals for 1998-1999 are to improve the reading program by developing and implementing new teaching strategies, to increase the use of computers as instructional tools, to identify at-risk students as early as possible and develop strategies to work with these students and parents, and to involve the staff in quality assurance planning and implementation.

National Context of the Problem

The importance of developing adequate literacy skills has long been recognized as critical to academic success. It is also recognized that these skills need to be mastered early in a child's education to make a significant difference. Children who have not learned to read by the end of first grade will experience difficulties in almost all other areas of the school curriculum, and the probability is very high that they will be poor readers for years to come. According to a study by Juel (1988), the probability that a child who is a poor reader at the end of first grade will remain a poor reader at the end of fourth grade is 88%. Juel noted, "Children who did not develop good word recognition skills in first grade began to dislike reading and read considerably less than good readers both in and out of school" (p.27).

Reading failure also causes children a debilitating loss of self-esteem as they struggle to keep up with their peers. The need for additional schooling and remedial services makes the poor readers expensive educational liabilities. In addition, a person who eventually leaves school as a nonreader continues to be a social liability, lacking basic skills for self-support and for making an

economic contribution to society (Boehnlein, 1987). Other social problems also may accompany students' early school failure. Copple (1992) states:

> If they fail to master basic skills by the third grade, they are at high risk of developing serious problems later on: becoming pregnant, becoming involved with drugs, dropping out of school. Eight-year-olds who have failed a grade and who also read below grade level are very unlikely to finish high school. (p. 5)

Of particular concern in the need for early literacy success are those children who have diverse learning and curricular needs. They may be identified as poor readers, at-risk, slow learners, reading disabled, language delayed, low achievers, or culturally disadvantaged. Despite the variety of labels given them, what is profoundly the same about these children is that they are behind in reading and language development.

At issue is an ever-growing contingent of students in regular division classrooms that do not qualify for additional special educational services, yet are not able to make appropriate grade-level achievements in school. Nationally, teachers are faced with the challenge of classrooms which have differently-abled children, children who don't qualify for special education services, and slow-learners (Goodman, 1995). The percentage of slow learners in the general population is approximately one in five students or 20 to 23% of the population reported with IQs of 70-89 (Texas, 1989). Even though there is not a published definition of the at-risk, low-achieving student found in a review of literature (Lehr, 1988), there are many common classroom characteristics exhibited by these students. According to Goodman (1995), they

- are commonly known as "the gazers" who can't or won't pay attention.
- may appear to be immature, angry, unsettled or unfocused and may require constant redirection or one-to-one supervision.

- fear failure and may refuse to take part in learning.
- often come into our classes hungry, not only for food, but attention.
- may have "invisible disabilities," such as language problems, fetal alcohol syndrome, or attention difficulties.
- perform at a slower pace than most children and require wait time, their classwork may be disorganized, late in arriving, or incomplete. (p. 1)

Some common demographic factors that seem to also influence some of these students are poverty, racial/ethnicity (Presseisen, 1988), single parent homes, and low educational level of parents (Pallas, Natriello, & McDill, 1989). There are factors in our society that can negatively impact students' learning and put them at risk of school failure.

- Some newborns each year have been exposed prenatally to drugs, including alcohol.
- More than 300,000 school-age children have been exposed to damaging levels of lead.
- The incidence of pediatric infection with HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) has risen dramatically in recent years, affecting some 15,000 to 30,000 children.
- One to two million children are subject to abuse.
- Of the 37,000 babies born each year weighing less than 3 ½ pounds who live long enough to leave the hospital, many still face substantial learning problems as a result of medical intervention. (Stevens & Price, 1992 p. 18)

Classroom teachers today are expected to do many specialized things they were not educated to do. They are called upon to play various roles in the lives of their students. In any given day, a teacher might need to be a social worker, psychologist, friend, nurse, and even a parental figure. Teachers also worry how the other academically-abled students in the classroom

will fare when the instructor's attention is so fragmented. Educators are understandably frustrated as they strive to meet the various needs of their students (Winebrenner, 1996).

The long-term cost of school failure by at-risk students is high for our community and for our nation. When students whose reading and mathematics test scores fall in the bottom fifth of their class are compared with their peers whose scores lie in the top half, researchers find those in the bottom fifth are nine times more likely to drop out of school, five times more likely to have an income below the poverty level, nine times more likely to have a child out of wedlock, and two times more likely to have been arrested during the previous year (Grant, 1988). Clearly, early literacy success and the educational future of at-risk primary students are of significant importance to all of society.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

Sites A and B

At sites A and B, the examiners presented a set of 300 and 90 sight word flashcards respectively to individual students. (Appendix A) A tally was kept for the number of words missed. The students were required to respond within two seconds for the word to be counted correct. At both sites, student scores were divided among four score classes that correspond with the district grading scale. The results within each score class are represented below in Figures 1 and 2.

Also, at sites A and B, the examiners tape recorded each student reading a selected passage. Each passage was at the appropriate grade level. A running record of errors was made for each sample. The number of words in the passage was then divided by the number of errors to find the percent of accurately read words. Again, these results were divided among four score classes that correspond to the district's grading scale. The findings are also illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

To test for reading comprehension the instructor at site A presented a reading sample to a class of 26 students. The grade level sample was presented on an overhead transparency.

(Appendix B) All students were given ample time to silently read the selection. Comprehension questions were read aloud by the instructor and students were then instructed to write the answers on a piece of paper. Correct answers were tabulated and the scores are presented in Figure 1.

At site B, the instructor gave a comprehension worksheet to a class of 22 students. (Appendix C) Students were given 30 minutes to read the grade level sample and answer the comprehension questions that followed. Correct answers were tabulated and the scores are illustrated in Figure 2.

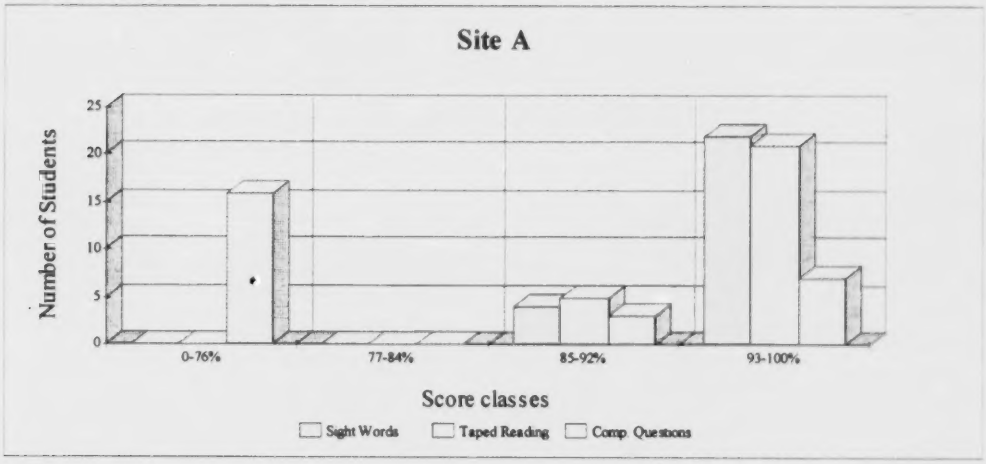

Figure 1. Number of students in each score class for the three pre-tests; sight words, taped reading selection, and comprehension questions (September, 1998).

At site A, a fourth grade classroom, 85% of the students were able to read at least 278 of the 300 sight words presented. The other 15% were able to identify between 258 and 277 of the sight words given. These findings contradict the initial belief that a lack of basic sight word

recognition was a major contributing factor to the low achievement of the fourth grade students in reading.

The results of the taped reading selection show that 81% of the students were able to read a passage at grade level while making very few errors. Although the remaining 19% made more mistakes while reading the passage, their error rate still placed them into an instructional level for reading. These findings contradict yet another belief, that the fourth grade students struggling academically in reading were having difficulty because they were not able to decode words. The high rate of decoding accuracy would explain why 96% of the students when interviewed believed they could read well. The students do not understand that reading contains more than sounding out words. When interviewed, only 31% of the students had some understanding of what reading entails.

Of the 26 students at site A, 62% scored in the below average range when it came to comprehending what they read. A possible cause of this could be that less than half (42%) of the students are read to at home. Without someone reading to them and asking questions, there is no one to check for understanding. The students at site A appear to lack basic comprehension strategies. For example, when interviewed only 50% said they picture what they are reading in their head. Finally, it can be concluded that the majority of students at this site need instruction in how to understand what they read rather than decoding techniques.

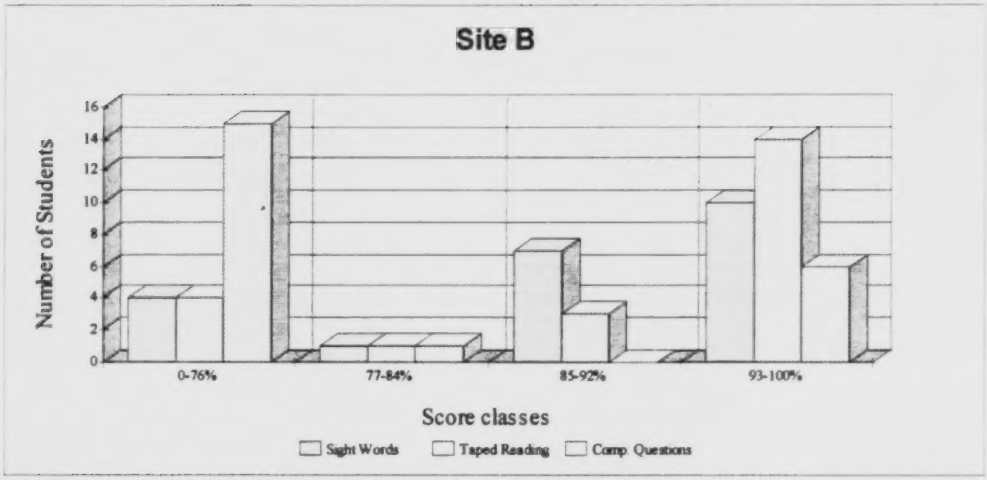

Figure 2. Number of students in each score class for the three pre-tests; sight words, taped reading selection, and comprehension questions (September, 1998).

At site B, a second grade classroom, 46% of the students were able to identify at least 84 of the 90 sight words presented. There were 32% of the students who could read at least 77 of the sight words given. It can be concluded that 77% of the students have an above average knowledge when it comes to identifying sight words. There were also 18% of the students who scored in the below average category, while only 1 student (4%) scored in the average range.

When given a passage to read, 64% of the students were able to read it while making very few mistakes. There were 14 % who scored in the instructional range. Again, 18% scored below average. It should be noted that the same students who scored below average in sight word recognition also scored below average when reading a passage. Only 1 student (4%) scored in the average range.

Both the sight word pretest and taped reading pretest were expected to be problem areas due to the developmental level of the second grade students. However, an analysis of these test results shows that only a small percentage of students need intense instruction in sight word

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knowledge and decoding strategies. When interviewed about their reading habits, 63% of the students felt they read well. This may be due to their belief that they know many words (sight words) and are able to sound out words (decoding skills). This is their definition of reading.

When tested on comprehension, the majority of the second grade students (68%) scored below average. This shows that most of the students do not have basic comprehension skills in their reading repertoire. When the students were interviewed, only 32% said they saw pictures in their head while they were reading. In addition, only 16% of the students when interviewed had a true understanding of what reading is.

At sites A and B students were given the following writing prompt orally and in written form: Write about something you and a friend do together. The time given to complete the prompt was unlimited. However, all of the students at both sites were finished within 20 minutes. No additional help was given by the instructors regarding spelling or grammar. Each writing sample was then graded on a 32 point scale. These scores were then divided into six score classes. Students were critiqued on five key features: focus, support, organization, conventions, and integration. (Appendix D) Scores were tallied and charted with the findings represented in Table 1.

Table 1

Writing scores for the targeted classes during the first month of the 1998-99 school year.

Writing Scores	**0-6**	**7-11**	**12-16**	**17-21**	**22-26**	**27-32**	**Totals**
Site A	0	11	10	4	1	0	**26**
Site B	2	14	6	0	0	0	**22**
Totals	**2**	**25**	**16**	**4**	**1**	**0**	**48**

At site A, the majority of students (81%) fell into the below average category for writing skills. These students would be considered writing below grade level. Many of the students provided very few, if any, supporting details in their paragraphs. Although a few students wrote their paragraphs in list form, most attempted to write in sentences. Only 19% of the students scored in the average category. These students would be considered writing at grade level. There were not any students who scored in the above average range.

At site B, all of the students scored in the below average category in writing skills. These students would be considered writing below grade level. All of the students failed to provide adequate support in their paragraphs. The low scores could be an indication of lack of process writing instruction in kindergarten and/or first grade. Or, they might indicate lack of writing experiences in the home.

Due to the importance of the reading/writing connection, the low writing scores combined with the comprehension reading pre-test scores indicate that 62% of the students at site A and 68% of the students at site B are considered at-risk for failure to develop adequate literacy skills.

Site C

The 16 students at site C are part of a pilot program offering all-day kindergarten to at-risk students. They were selected for the program through a screening process conducted in June and August of 1998. The screening consisted of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary test, a speech and language evaluation, and teacher-made tests on motor skills, basic readiness skills, and print concepts. Parents filled out a survey form that was used to determine family at-risk factors. The tests and the parent survey were scored on a point system (Appendix E). The 16 highest scoring students were eligible for the program. Parents were offered the option of sending their students all day and all 16 families chose to put their children in the pilot program. It should be noted that

in this at-risk class, the pre-intervention scores are considerably lower than the other two sites, where the classes consist of a random mixture of students with a wide range of abilities.

At site C the examiner showed 40 preprimer sight words from the Dolch word list to each kindergarten student. (Appendix F) The student was given two seconds to respond correctly. A tally was kept of the number of words correctly stated.

The students at site C were also shown 26 upper case letters and 26 lower case letters on flash cards. The examiner worked individually with each child. The students were asked to name the letter and were given two seconds to do so. A tally sheet showed which letters and how many letters they were able to name correctly. The results are displayed in Figure 3.

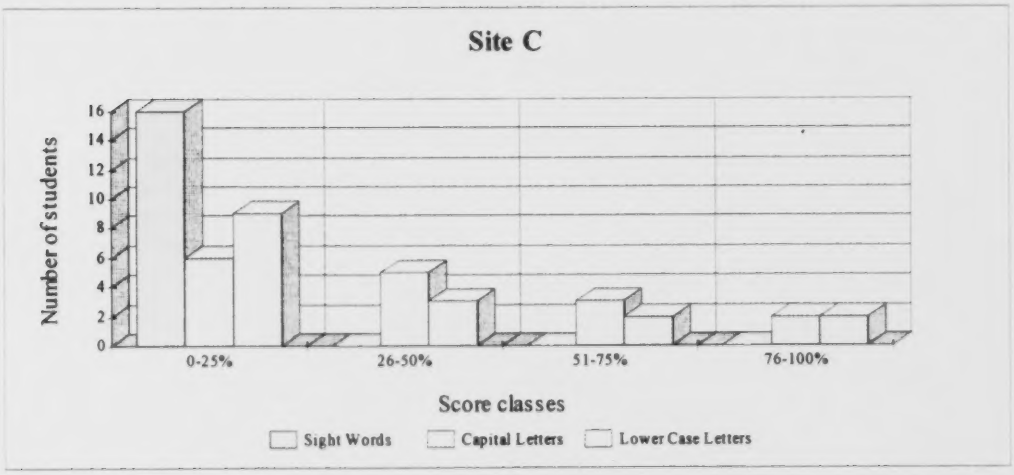

Figure 3. Number of students in each score class for the three pre-tests; sight words, capital letters, and lower case letters (September, 1998).

At site C, 25% of the students were able to name only two of the forty sight words presented to them. Another 12% of the students could name only one sight word, while the remaining 63% could name no sight words. The two words that could be identified by students were "a" and "I", so it is likely that they knew them as letter names, not actual words.

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It should be noted, however, that in a checklist for kindergarten literacy, the students all showed a high awareness of environmental print. (Appendix G) For example, 100% of the students could recognize the word McDonald's ® when it appeared in the business logo, 81% could name Pizza Hut ®, 69% could name Coca-Cola ®, and 63% could name Kroger's ® (local grocery store chain). It can be inferred that their high exposure to environmental print has caused their recognition of these words, while their exposure to the sight words has been minimal to this point.

Anecdotal notes taken by the researcher point out interesting reactions by the students as they attempted to name the sight words. The task was clearly beyond their ability, but they used a variety of strategies to cope with the situation. Some children simply sat and said nothing as the words were shown. Others shrugged their shoulders or said, "I don't know". Most children gave random letter names and some combined numbers with letters. One child gave the first or last letter of the word, and another attempted to spell each word. Several children, realizing these were words and not letters, said random words and even looked around the room to find possible words to say. The word on the card might be "see", for example, and the child would say "pencil".

With 69% of the students knowing less than 50% of the capital letters presented and 75% of the students knowing less than 50% of the lower-case letters, it would appear that these students are falling way below grade level. However, it should be noted that the expectation for students entering kindergarten is not that 100% of the students know 100% of the letters in September. Due to having little exposure to letters prior to entering school, most of the students are probably learning the letters as they are introduced each week in the classroom. It is true that some children do come to school ready to read or even reading, but in the at-risk group this

would not appear to be the case. In the reading interviews conducted by the researcher, 25% of the class reported they are not read to at home. While most students said they see their parents reading, when asked what they see them reading, the most common responses were the names of children's books. The inference could be made that these students do not all have role models for reading at home. When asked why people read, five students replied that adults read because children want them to, again leading to the inference that the adults they see reading are not usually reading for adult purposes, but rather for their children's enjoyment.

The students at site C were read a story about the four seasons. They discussed the book and a poster in a large group discussion and named their favorite season. The students also gave examples of activities to do in their favorite season. They were then instructed to draw a picture about their favorite season and to write a sentence or sentences about the picture. The pictures were drawn in small groups, and the students were given as much time as needed to complete their pictures and writing. Each writing sample was scored on a seven point scale. (Appendix H) Scores were then tallied and charted with the findings shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Writing scores for the targeted classes during the first month of the 1998-99 school year.

Writing Scores	1	2	3	4	5	6	Totals
Site C	2	0	14	0	0	0	16

The majority of the students (87%) were able to draw a picture related to the writing prompt given and to write about it with scribbles or some letters. Those who wrote letters used mostly random letters with no spacing. A few students attempted to copy the names of the seasons from the poster which was within their sight. Two students (13%) scored lower in points

because they drew a picture that was completely unrelated to the prompt. Most of the students were in the scribbling stage of emergent writing and showed some interest in writing and reading back what they had written.

Students were scored on a checklist for kindergarten literacy skills. They were shown a preprimer trade book in a one-on-one situation with the interviewer. The students were asked 15 questions about the book to assess the level of emerging literacy skills. Students were also asked to find their first name among six names, to give a rhyming word for three words, and to name four examples of environmental print shown on flash cards. The student responses were not timed, but the interviewer went quickly to the next question if there was no response.

The students showed strong skills in finding some parts of the book. Most or all of the students were able to show the front of the book, the back of the book, the picture on a page, one letter, and the first word in a sentence. All students were able to recognize their first name when shown six students' names. All students were able to name the word McDonald's ®, and most were able to name Coca-Cola ®, Pizza Hut ®, and Kroger's ® (local grocery store chain).

Literacy skills that were difficult for most students included finding the title of the book, explaining the use of a period, finding a long word, and finding a short word. Naming rhyming words was also a difficult skill, with only two students able to give a rhyming word for "cat" and no student able to give a word to rhyme with "bell" or "hand".

Literacy skills were at the emergent level in the kindergarten students at site C. Many of these young students were excited about reading, with 44% reporting on a reading interview that they can read. However, of those reporting they cannot yet read, 78% thought it would be hard to learn to read. This result indicates some hesitancy among a large group of these at-risk

students. The researcher noted that the enthusiasm and confidence level of the students needs to be continually monitored.

Probable Causes

The probable causes at the individual sites mirror the probable causes found in a literature review. In classifying the various reasons for the problem, five specific areas present themselves: social, student, curriculum, school structure, and teacher expectations.

Underlying the social causes, many students identified as at-risk come from a lower socio-economic home lacking in literacy experiences. As Cunningham and Allington (1999) state, "Poverty is not the only factor that determines if a child is at high risk for academic failure, but it is a pervasive one." (p. 1) There has never been a study that conclusively links socio-economic status to being the cause of academic success or failure. However, there is a strong correlation. Children who come from homes of higher income and educational level, also generally have the benefits of a literacy-rich environment. These homes have books, newspapers and magazines. They have writing materials available. Their parents continually model for them the skills of daily reading and writing. The children in turn have a much higher success rate in school. The lower socio-economic home may not have these supplies. Their parents may not realize the importance of modeling literacy skills for their children or they, themselves, may not have a high level of literacy. As these children begin their schooling, they are already at a disadvantage and show more failure in school.

When focusing on the student as the cause for the problem, the issue of various learning styles presents itself. Many at-risk students are more tactile-kinesthetic in their approach to learning and many classrooms are organized for the auditory learner. If a classroom is set up to benefit an auditory learner, then the students who are stronger in other learning styles tend to

show less success in their schooling. Allington (1983) argues that "good and poor readers differ in their reading ability as much because of differences in instruction as variations in individual learning styles or aptitudes." (p. 548) This argument leads into a further cause for the problem, that being the way a school is structured.

Many times the students who are considered at-risk end up having less instructional time within a lower quality classroom that again puts the students who are identified as at-risk at a disadvantage. They begin their schooling without certain literacy experiences and when they do not receive the needed instruction, the gap between the good student and the at-risk student widens. Not only at the sites included in this study but in the research found, there is a tendency for some schools to have an informal tracking system set up where certain parents request specific teachers. Many of the students placed in these requested classrooms come from a higher socio-economic background. The students identified as at-risk, however, do not have a parent who is either knowledgeable about requesting specific classes or willing to do so. Therefore, these students are placed in rooms with teachers who are not often requested, mainly due to the perception that they have a lower quality of instruction. Within these classrooms, studies have been done to identify the allocation of time for specific instruction. While the minutes involved in reading instruction seems not to differ, the amount of time that the students are on task and the level of instruction offered differs greatly. At-risk students are on task less often than other students and the lessons tend to be directed at emphasizing words, sounds and letters (decoding) whereas students not at risk are presented more lessons emphasizing meaning (higher order thinking skills) (Allington, 1983).

Another probable cause related to school structure has to do with lack of financing for some school systems. During the 1970s and 80s, money budgeted for education to compensate

for the effects of poverty was decreased while the budget for monies targeted for handicapped services increased. At-risk students, identified by low achievement scores in reading, were often labeled handicapped rather than needing remedial reading services. These label designations often influence the type of instruction given. Special education students tend to participate less in classroom reading instruction and spend more time completing seat-work. "Although obviously unintended, the shifts in federal fiscal policy shaped the nature of instruction experienced by many low achieving students" (McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1991A p. 26). Or if given the financing to provide specific services for students who are considered at-risk, McGill-Franzen and Allington feel it is too little too late. Such intervention is rarely an option for kindergarten or first grade. Many school districts (the local sites included), in order to keep their special education numbers low, wait for students to fail standardized or state-mandated tests. These tests are usually given in second or third grade. Once the students have failed, various services become available. "Because remediation is often too little too late, it rarely accelerates literacy development and it is possible for children to remain in remedial programs for years without ever catching up with their peers" (McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1991A, p. 26).

In addition to the way a school is structured, specific curriculum and the methods used to teach it contribute to literacy problems of at-risk students. Again Gersten and Dimino (1989) agree with Allington (1983) that students who are poor readers receive a lower level of instruction involving decoding skills, rather than higher order thinking skills. A report based on the findings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, "Who Reads Best?" concurs with this belief that curriculums for at-risk students tend to limit the number of literacy experiences that at-risk students have in the classroom. The authors of the report also found that the differing forms of instruction continue throughout high school (Applebee et al., 1988).

Lastly, teacher expectations appear to be different for those disadvantaged children that come to school and are identified as at-risk. Knapp, Turnbull and Shields have directed their research towards critiquing conventional forms of educating disadvantaged youth. They believe that these at-risk students are "capable of much more than is typically expected of them and that schools can organize themselves to demand high academic performance from these students" (1990, p.7).

In conclusion, the probable causes that are supported by a review of the literature include social, student, curriculum, school structure and teacher expectations. Each cause is prevalent at all sites in this study. However, the degree to which each cause interferes with the literacy development of at-risk students varies from site to site. The predominant cause at site A is social factors due to 86.3% of the students coming from low-income families. At sites B and C, the predominant factors are the curriculum offered and how the schools are structured. Whatever the cause, there is a definite need to find a solution. The educational future of at-risk students depends upon early literacy success.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

When looking for possible solutions to students having inadequate literacy skills, a variety of programs can be found. Some are related to the social causes of the problem, while the other programs focus mainly on school restructuring or curriculum aspects.

There are many known social programs that would improve the achievement of at-risk students; prevention programs such as Head Start, Even Start, First Step, and interventions involving families and communities. However, these solutions are beyond the control of the classroom teacher. "These changes, additions, and adaptations usually require a total school effort, an administrative decision, or some form of community action. Some will require political action in legislative arenas" (Cunningham & Allington, 1999, p. 257).

When looking at the restructuring of schools, a possible solution for reaching students with inadequate literacy skills is to reduce class size. This has become a popular idea in the past several years, especially in the early elementary grades (Slavin, Karweit, & Wasik, 1993). In theory, this proposal seems to be an excellent avenue for allowing classroom teachers more time to spend with individual students. Logically, if a teacher has 20 rather than 25 students in her class, she would be able to see each student for a longer period of time. Reducing class sizes, however, would be an extremely expensive task, but if it produced more successful students then one would think the expense would be justified. But how successful is it? "Decades of research

on class sizes have established that small reductions in class size (for example, from 25 to 20) have few if any effects on student achievement" (Slavin, et al., 1993).

The question then becomes what if class size is reduced even farther, maybe to 15 rather than 20? A statewide study in the Tennessee school system put this question to the test. They randomly created class sizes in kindergarten of 15, 20, 25, and 25 students with an aide and tracked the students' progress through third grade. Although the study found moderate success through third grade which favored small class sizes, one year after the study very little difference was found between students who were in a class of 25 versus students in the classrooms of 15. Placing students in smaller classes may be part of an overall strategy of getting students off on the right track, but it is clearly not an acceptable intervention by itself. (Slavin, et al., 1993).

Another possible solution is creating multi-age classrooms. These classrooms contain students with similar skill levels rather than similar age or grade level. The idea behind this possible solution is that children are able to work at their own pace on particular skills. The multi-age classroom in simple form appears to have some benefits, but in more complex forms the multi-age classrooms seem to be ineffective (Slavin, et al., 1993). The simple form of this strategy would be to group students across grade levels for group instruction. The more complex form of the multi-age classroom would be to instruct students individually, using learning stations and open spaces (Slavin, et al., 1993). Although parts of the multi-age classroom would be beneficial for students with poor literacy skills, it is not a solution by itself.

Retention is the oldest solution for the unsuccessful reader (Cunningham & Allington, 1999). But is it a beneficial solution? In the short term it may appear so. Students who are retained seem to have higher test scores the next year. Over time, however, children who repeat a grade do poorer in school than their peers who also had low scores yet were promoted to the next

grade (McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1991B). Retaining a child makes the assumption that the problem lies with the child. Instead of determining if the child was instructed properly, the child is sent back into the same setting to experience the same material in the same manner. (Darling-Hammond & Falk, 1997). Retaining students is also expensive. To retain a child costs "from $3,500 - $7,000 depending on the district and the state in which the child attends school" (Cunningham & Allington, 1999, p. 7).

So, are the taxpayers getting their money's worth when schools retain students? According to Cunningham & Allington (1999), children who are retained are four times more likely to drop out of school than other low achieving students who are sent on to the next grade. Darling-Hammond & Falk (1997) suggest that retention increases the drop-out rate of students. Retention also has "negative effects on personal adjustments, self-concept, and attitudes toward school" (Russell, Lickteig, & Grandgenett, 1995, p.328).

Tracking is another solution intended to help the at-risk student. It was introduced in the 1940s and was commonly used through the 1960s (Cunningham & Allington, 1999). Tracking puts students of the same ability level in the same classroom. The belief behind tracking is if all of the slow learners are together then it should allow the teacher to better instruct them. Another argument for tracking is that the high achieving students will not be held back while the instructor teaches the lower achieving students. This all seems very logical. However, there are some flaws in this way of thinking. First of all, students are generally split into three groups: low, middle, and high. There is usually the same number of students in each group. Statistics show, however, that most students would fall into the middle or "average" category. This would then make the groupings unequally balanced. Another inherent problem with tracking is the least experienced or least qualified teachers usually end up with the low achieving students. These students need to be

taught by the more experienced and better qualified teachers (Cunningham & Allington, 1999). Research has shown that tracking neither helps nor hinders the average student. There are few advantages or disadvantages for the students who are placed in the high group. However, tracking can be harmful for those students who are placed in the low group (Cunningham & Allington, 1999). Tracking appears to be no solution at all but rather part of the problem. As stated before, school restructuring changes are rarely within the realm of the classroom teacher's control.

Other possible solutions that are more accessible to teachers deal with curriculum issues. When focusing on curriculum requiring specific teacher training as a possible solution to improving the at-risk students' achievement, there are many programs available. The differences between these programs can be characterized in three ways. The programs are either phonics-based, whole language/literature-based, or a combination of both. As history shows, the educational pendulum of deciding which is the right way to teach reading swings to the extremes.

The first extreme is the "phonics only " approach to reading and writing instruction. Many political figures are heard daily decrying the virtues of the "Back-to-Basics" movement. There are many instructional materials available to teach reading by using the phonetic approach. *Intensive Phonics, Alpha Phonics* and *Direct Instruction* are just a few commonly known programs previously used by the authors of this study. Decoding words is an important strategy used in good reading and because of that, the importance of phonics cannot be denied. Our language is based on an alphabetic system. Cunningham & Allington (1999) state that "one of the beginning readers' biggest responsibilities is to figure out how our alphabetic language works." (p. 13) Through their research, they have found that children can figure out the letter system on their own. However, by directly instructing students in phonics, especially the at-risk students, their

literacy acquisition can be greatly improved at a quicker rate (Cunningham & Allington, 1999). Simply stated, phonics is an important component in reading instruction. The debate begins when teachers and researchers alike are asked whether the phonics-based approach should be the only way to teach reading and writing. If the reading and comprehending of real books is the ultimate objective of a reading program, then phonics instruction alone is not enough to improve literacy.

Within the opposing realm of thoughts on reading instruction, one will find the whole language/literature-based approach. The whole language approach to reading and writing instruction involves curriculum changes which have benefited the at-risk student. In chapter two, it was noted that poor readers often receive lower level instruction in decoding rather than higher order thinking instruction. The whole language approach holds as one of its basic beliefs that learning is easiest when it is from whole to part, in authentic contexts, and functional (Watson, 1994). Thus, in a whole language classroom, the at-risk student does not become delegated to the low-ability group where lower level instruction occurs. Language development in the whole language approach is considered a holistic personal-social achievement and the learner owns the process. All learners are viewed positively and with acceptance of their languages, cultures and experiences. The classroom is seen as a learning community, and learning itself is seen as joyous and fulfilling (Goodman, 1986). All of these beliefs and practices create an environment conducive to optimal academic growth for the at-risk student.

Teaching strategies often included in the whole language approach are literature based lessons, guided reading lessons, and language experience lessons. By reading and analyzing good children's literature, students gain a broader perspective on their own life experiences and also enter into different worlds. Low-achieving students discover that literature can be entertaining and may have application to their own lives (Gersten & Dimino, 1989). Guided reading lessons

help children learn how to use independent reading strategies successfully. The teacher works with small groups and supports each reader's development at increasingly challenging levels of reading difficulty (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Guided reading is a teaching strategy that helps at-risk students experience success as they read independently with the teacher's support. Language experience lessons begin with the student's own language. Stories from the student's personal life are dictated to the teacher, printed exactly as dictated, and then used for reading instruction and activities (Winebrenner, 1996). This strategy is especially beneficial for students with limited vocabulary who are reading below grade level, and it helps students to understand and experience the connection between speaking, writing, and reading. Critics of the whole language approach and the related strategies argue that there is not enough direct instruction of specific skills. They believe that some skills are overlooked if they do not appear in the context of the literature being used for instruction. Others argue that low achieving students definitely need direct instruction in decoding skills because they may not acquire them through whole language instruction.

Another approach to reading instruction, however, does not fit into either the "phonics-only" or "literature-only" school of thought. There are many tutorial programs specifically aimed at the lower achieving student in the primary grades. These programs usually require some form of teacher training prior to intervening with at-risk students and follow-up teacher support. One such program, the *Students Achieving Independent Learning* or *SAIL* program was developed to teach students the various strategies required of good readers. The strategies are organized within the traditional stages of the reading process: (1) what to do when you are getting ready to read, (2) questions to ask prior to reading, (3) strategies to utilize while reading, and (4) what to do after reading (Bergman & Schuder, 1993). Students self-select their own reading material to increase their independence and interest in the material. While the initial *SAIL* program was

developed to be used with a small group of students identified as at-risk, the program has been used by many teachers during whole class instruction for reading comprehension. Teachers utilizing the *SAIL* program are involved in yearly training and follow-up support sessions (Bergman, 1992). Lack of funding for this training could be a deterrent to implementing the program within a school district.

Another tutorial approach that also requires teacher training is the well-known *Reading Recovery* program developed by Marie Clay. *Reading Recovery* is a highly structured model requiring a year of teacher training and feedback. It emphasizes direct teaching with first graders of metacognitive strategies, "learning to read by reading," teaching of phonics in the context of students' reading, and integration of reading and writing (Slavin, Karweit, & Wasik, 1993). *Reading Recovery* is a one-on-one approach. With that intensive interaction, the at-risk student can show large gains in literacy development. Each lesson follows a specific sequence developed to teach the student how to be an independent reader. Because of the individualized nature of the program, the number of children effectively completing the program will depend upon the funding available in a school district for teachers and teacher training.

An alternative to the *Reading Recovery* individualized tutorial program is the *Early Intervention in Reading (EIR)* program (Taylor, Short, Frye, & Shearer, 1992). *EIR*-trained first grade teachers implement small group reading intervention strategies utilizing the philosophy of *Reading Recovery*. Quality literature, developing the students' phonemic awareness and instruction in phonetic, syntactic and contextual clue strategies are all included within this program. When this program is utilized in conjunction with the regular first grade reading program, "many low-achieving first grade students experience considerable success in reading" (Taylor, et al., 1992, p.597). If compared with the success rate of implementing a *Reading*

Recovery program, the results are not as dramatic. However, financially, *EIR* appears to be more cost-effective when looking at the number of students reached through the differing programs. As with the above mentioned programs, teacher training is required and funding for that training can be difficult to locate.

While the above tutorial programs focus on one area of concern in the student's educational life, there is a program available that emphasizes prevention and early intervention. *Success for All* (*SFA*) prevention strategies include high-quality preschool and/or full day kindergarten programs. Reduced class sizes, non-grading procedures in reading and cooperative learning activities are all elements included in the intervention. A connection between home and school also needs to be highly developed due to the nightly reading required for the program to be successful. Because of this need, a school that wishes to implement *Success for All* must have a full-time family support team which includes a social worker and parent liaison person. Academically, the students are grouped and regrouped by reading level across age levels. The success rate of this program differs depending on the research cited. Groups of educators who are anti-*SFA* say that the program does not live up to its declarations. Proponents of *SFA* highlight the positive effects on students' reading achievement and the decrease in retentions and special education referrals. Allington (1992) explains the inconsistencies in his research by stating that

> while the initial evaluation indicates that *SFA* failed to attain the goal of all children achieving on level by the end of third grade, the average reading achievement of third graders was substantially higher than the achievement of children in the comparison schools and approached the original goal. (p.247)

Whereas the above-mentioned programs all require teacher training for implementation, *Success for All* also may include a complete school restructuring component. The cost of such a program would be dependent upon the facets already in place.

In an effort to improve the literacy skills of students, educators have developed numerous teaching strategies that should be noted. These innovative strategies have sometimes been used singularly and/or in combination with other strategies. As noted in chapter 2, one of the probable causes for inadequately developed literacy skills is the different learning styles and ways of thinking among at-risk children. Some educators have implemented multiple intelligence lessons based on the theories of Howard Gardner (1983) in an attempt to encourage each student's particular way of learning. Schools generally tend to focus on only two intelligences, verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical, while the other six intelligences are ignored or given minimal attention. Those students who may be strong in the other six intelligences are left unmotivated and may be labeled as low achievers or at-risk students (Chapman, 1993; Dunn, 1995). Educators and schools across the United States are implementing multiple intelligences strategies, some with remarkable success. Winebrenner (1996) cites two examples of schools, one in St. Louis and one in Pittsburgh, where attention to multiple intelligences has positively affected both the discipline referrals and the academic performance of students. Winebrenner further states that learning styles and multiple intelligences theory are complementary. Strategies and techniques developed to meet the needs of students with different learning styles (auditory, visual, and tactile-kinesthetic) may also be used to enhance specific intellligences, and the reverse is also true.

Cooperative learning is another curriculum change which has been used effectively to improve the learning of at-risk students. Johnson and Johnson (1994) describe a cooperative

school as a caring community of learners characterized by cooperative efforts to achieve meaningful goals. In this environment, competition between high and low achievers is minimized as all students in a group work together for a common purpose. According to Winebrenner (1996) cooperative learning can dramatically improve the learning of students who are struggling. These students, when working in cooperative learning groups, are encouraged by their more academically able peers, rather than being placed in competition with them. At-risk students perform much better in classrooms where cooperative learning groups are used because it is then acceptable for students to help each other learn.

As noted, the solutions available for helping at-risk students are varied. Socially, the issue of poverty and lack of literacy experiences at home cannot be solved by a classroom teacher alone. The same is true for the school structure. Classroom teachers could become a part of the restructuring by becoming verbal and sharing their beliefs drawn from what the research shows. However, the final decisions lay with the higher administration.

Teachers also have no control over the students who are placed in their classrooms. The children that come to school today may be different from the children twenty, ten or even five years ago, but a teacher's job is to find ways to present a quality education to them. Again, the solution is not to try to change the child. So where does that leave educators today?

The only area that teachers have any control over is curriculum. If the curriculum requires additional funding for teacher training or materials, then again, their hands are tied unless the administration approves the curricular changes. But what if there were a curricular program that would involve changing the classroom structure, initiating individual teaching strategies and it didn't cost any additional money? In addition, the research shows that this type of program would succeed with at-risk students in the primary grades. The program, a "High Quality Classroom",

was developed by Patricia Cunningham and Richard Allington (1999) after researching what a literate home environment looks like and how that effects students in the classroom. When children come from a literate home where books are available and they are being read to daily, the children are more successful in the school environment. Cunningham and Allington then looked at ways to simulate that same environment in the classroom. When that was done, they found these classroom teachers were successful with improving the achievement of at-risk students. By taking all the information that educators have learned about reading and writing instruction and looking at what is successful and what isn't, they have developed a list of common characteristics that successful classroom teachers share. Then they have given suggestions by levels on various strategies that teachers can utilize in their own classrooms within their own teaching context. "The strategies, activities, organizational patterns, etc. are a compilation of what the most effective teachers do" (Cunningham & Allington, 1999, p.256). The *High Quality Classroom* requires no additional funding. It requires that the teacher read and plan for the program's implementation. It does require some restructuring, but only within the individual classrooms if the strategies are not currently being used. There may be some belief restructuring required on the part of the teacher, too. As for curriculum, the teacher utilizes the district's curriculum. The difference is in how he presents the materials and information.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of creating a literacy-rich environment during the period of September 1998 to January 1999, the students from the targeted primary classes will increase their reading and writing abilities, as measured by anecdotal records, literacy skill checklists, and student assessments.

In order to accomplish the project objective, the following processes will be necessary:

1. Students will be actively engaged in real-world reading and writing activities.
2. The teacher will explain, demonstrate, and support reading strategies with the students.
3. The teacher will describe, model, and support writing strategies with the students.
4. The teacher will present strategies to assist students in spelling and decoding words.
5. The teacher will expand students' world and word knowledge through various instructional activities.

Project Action Plan

Creating a literacy-rich environment involves not only specific processes, but also a philosophical viewpoint on the part of the teacher. This type of classroom exhibits greater student-teacher interaction, process-oriented rather than product-oriented activities, and an immersion in authentic reading and writing activities throughout the day. Many at-risk students come to the classroom with inadequate literacy skills. Following is an action plan which connects the high-quality classroom philosophy (Cunningham & Allington, 1999) with activities that are beneficial for at-risk students, as shown in the review of literature.

I. Students will be actively engaged in real-world reading and writing activities.

A. Kindergarten classroom

1. A large variety of printed materials will be available on a daily basis for self-selected reading during choice time. (Appendix I)
2. A variety of writing instruments and materials will be available in the writing center for daily use during choice time. (Appendix J)
3. Big Buddies will come from the sixth grade once a week for 30 minutes to read with their kindergarten friends. (Appendix K) The older students will select a

book from a crate supplied by the kindergarten teacher and will practice reading the book prior to meeting with their buddies. Follow-up literature-based activities will accompany the reading each week.

B. Second and fourth grade classrooms.

1. On a daily basis, students will self-select reading material. Various levels of printed material will be made available within the classroom library.
2. In addition, students will also have daily time for self-selected writing activities, such as journal, story and/or letter writing.
3. Also, on a daily basis, the classroom teacher will read various forms of print which will include informational, traditional, multicultural and pleasurable reading samples.
4. Weekly, the targeted students will pair up with younger students to share their favorite stories. This will then be developed into a peer-teaching activity.
5. Throughout the week, students will have the opportunity to share points of interest from their reading with their classmates at a scheduled sharing time forum.

II. The teachers will explain, demonstrate and support reading strategies with the students.

A. Kindergarten classroom

1. Daily shared reading time will be conducted in which the teacher reads several books to the class. These will include at least one big book, which will be used to demonstrate conventions of print. (Appendix L) Other books may be familiar books requested by students or new books to go with units of study. Charts of familiar songs, poems, and fingerplays will be included in shared reading time.

During shared reading, the teacher draws attention to the details of print, the sound of language, and the artwork and illustrations as she reads the books aloud.

2. Supported reading will occur during choice time when the children read or pretend-read independently. The teacher will work with one child or a small group of children to introduce strategies good readers use. (Appendix M)
3. Each day the students will participate in 10 minutes of RAP (Reading Any Place) (Routman, 1988). Children will select one or two books to read or pretend-read alone or with one partner. The teacher will also read alone or with one or two children during RAP time.

B. Second and fourth grade classrooms

1. On a daily basis, the classroom teacher will demonstrate various reading strategies to be followed by individual practice reading time. (Appendix M)
2. As an on-going instructional strategy, various graphic organizers will be introduced, developed and mastered to supplement the reading instructional program. (Appendix N)
3. Listening/Reading Transfer (LRT) Lessons (Cunningham & Allington, 1999) will be implemented weekly within the targeted classrooms. These lessons will guide students through instruction and practice of various reading strategies. (Appendix O)
4. On a continuous basis, various visualization techniques will be practiced by the targeted students to develop comprehension skills. (Appendix P)

5. Throughout the implementation of the listed processes, various literature selections will be used for reading instruction along with the basal reading series (Pearson, et al., 1989). (Appendix Q)
6. At various times during the week, the classroom teacher will host an After-Lunch Bunch (Cunningham & Allington, 1999) session. Easy reading books will be read individually or with partners and then shared within the group.

III. The teachers will describe, model and support writing strategies with the targeted students.

A. Kindergarten classroom

1. Students will do daily writing in individual journals. As they arrive each day, they will take their five-page journal to a table to draw and write on one page. These journals will be shared, if desired, during shared reading time. The journals will then be sent home each Friday.
2. Shared writing time will take place two or three times a week. The teacher will discuss the thinking and writing process while writing on chart paper or on the board. Possibilities for writing include lists for class use, language experience stories from the class, letters, class news, or personal stories from the teacher.
3. Students will dictate stories to a teacher or another adult once a week. These personal language expressions will be written exactly as the child says them. Stories will be illustrated and may be shared in the author's chair at the end of the day.
4. Students will make class books for each major unit, usually two class books per month. Each child will write or dictate one or more sentences on a given topic and

illustrate the page. All pages are then bound into a class book which may be checked out and taken home to share.

B. Second and fourth grade classrooms

1. On a daily basis, the classroom teacher will model writing strategies for the students by writing a composite of student-generated ideas.
2. At various times, in addition to shared writing, students will also complete group writing activities.
3. Throughout the implementation of the stated intervention, a conscious effort will be made daily to strengthen the reading-writing connection. This will be accomplished by having the students write before and after a reading selection.
4. The writing process of writing, editing, publishing and sharing will be completed on a continuous basis. During this process, the classroom teacher will model specific strategies relative to each stage of writing. The targeted students then will be given time to practice these strategies.
5. In addition to the actual writing process instruction, the classroom teacher will model and instruct the students in the four main forms of writing, letter, narrative, expository and persuasive. The students will then practice the various writing strategies presented.

IV. The teachers will present strategies to assist students in spelling and decoding words.

A. Kindergarten classroom

1. The teacher will introduce a variety of activities throughout the intervention to build a foundation for letter/sound learning. (Appendix R)

2. The students will participate in on-going activities designed to increase their phonological awareness. (Appendix S)
3. The teacher will implement lessons throughout the intervention to improve word recognition and seeing patterns in words. (Appendix T)

B. Second and fourth grade classrooms.

1. Throughout the intervention, students will learn through various instructional strategies high-frequency words. These words will then be utilized in their reading and writing. (Appendix U)
2. Also throughout the intervention, students will learn various spelling patterns and decoding strategies. (Appendix V)
3. On a continuous basis, the students will develop self-monitoring skills. These skills will help students clarify if what they are reading sounds correct and makes sense.

V. The teacher will expand students' world and word knowledge through various instructional activities.

A. Kindergarten classroom

1. The teacher will incorporate the students' prior knowledge and increase vocabulary by presenting thematic units in the science and social studies areas. Learning center materials and activities will concentrate on increasing students' knowledge of their world.
2. The teacher will plan and implement a variety of activities designed to expand the students' world and word knowledge. (Appendix W)

B. Second and fourth grade classrooms

1. The teacher will concentrate on developing the students' prior knowledge and vocabulary throughout the intervention. This will be accomplished by organizing and presenting thematic reading/language arts lessons with an emphasis placed on the curricular areas of science and social science.
2. In addition, the teacher will continuously provide various activities like word walls, topic experts and simulations which are specifically related to expanding word and world knowledge. (Appendix X)

Method of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, observation checklists for sight words, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension will be developed for students at sites A and B. At site C, observation checklists for letter recognition, sight words, and emerging literacy skills will be developed. In addition, reading and writing skill anecdotal records will be kept at all sites. Rubrics will be developed for scoring writing samples and reading interviews with all students will be conducted to assess attitudes and interests regarding reading.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to provide a literacy-rich educational environment within the targeted classrooms to improve the students' literacy skills. To accomplish this, various strategies were utilized. Students were actively engaged in real world reading and writing activities on a continuous basis. In addition, the teachers directly instructed students in various reading, writing and spelling strategies. Furthermore, activities to expand students' word knowledge were used. These various processes were interwoven with the intent of creating a "High Quality Classroom" (Cunningham and Allington, 1999).

To engage the students in real world reading and writing activities at Site A, fourth grade children were given the opportunity daily to self-select their own reading material. They were given plastic tubs which contained eight to ten books at various reading levels. Next, the students were given time to write in their journals three times per week on average. A choice of topics was given or they had the option of choosing their own topic. In addition, the teacher read on a daily basis from numerous types of print including but not limited to newspapers, encyclopedias, atlases, multicultural books, and chapter books. The students were also paired up biweekly with kindergartners and read stories to them. They chose books from their tubs or the library and also wrote and illustrated stories. The students were able to share books they had read with other

students in the class in what became known as the "After Lunch Bunch". This activity was done three times per week.

In order to improve reading, the teacher explained and demonstrated a variety of reading strategies. Various graphic organizers were utilized on a daily basis throughout the intervention. Furthermore, the teacher also taught various visualization techniques such as predicting outcomes, visualizing the action in the story, and drawing what the students hear. Reading materials were selected from a variety of sources including chapter books and stories from the basal reader.

In order to improve student writing, the teacher described and modeled writing strategies on a daily basis. Story writing demonstrations were based on student generated topics. The students were shown how to plan a story using different graphic organizers. They were then asked to write stories of their own using the strategies taught. As a culminating activity, once a week the students were allowed to share their stories with members of their class. Students were also asked to complete group writing activities once a week. These activities were usually done in groups of three. The students were able to choose the topic most of the time. On occasion, the teacher gave the characters, setting, and problem. Students were given the opportunity to edit each other's work, make corrections, and publish the final product on a computer. The teacher also instructed the students in letter and narrative writing. Real world experience was achieved through letter writing to individuals in the community.

The teacher presented strategies in order to increase student spelling accuracy and the ability to decode words. A word wall was displayed to show high frequency words. Five words were added to the wall each week and discussed. New vocabulary and words that were misspelled frequently in the students' writings were also added to the wall. Students focused on

various spelling patterns each week. These patterns came from the words in their spelling books. The students were asked to complete different activities in order to learn the patterns of the words.

In order to increase the students' prior knowledge and vocabulary repertoire, the teacher taught various vocabulary building lessons. For example, discussion occurred regularly during and after reading various forms of print. After reading about it in the newspaper, the students took a field trip to a local orchard and learned about apples, trees, and the orchard. New vocabulary was also introduced on the word wall.

Some changes to the Project's Action Plan at Site A did occur due to time constraints. Journal writing and teacher directed writing lessons were not accomplished on a daily basis. These activities, however, did take place as consistently as possible. The weekly buddy reading with younger students became biweekly. Thematic units were utilized twice during the intervention to increase the students' world and word knowledge. No specific Listening/Reading/Transfer (LRT) lessons were implemented. However, instruction followed an introduction, demonstration and practice model.

At Site B, the least intrusive components of the intervention were introduced initially. During the first week, the second grade students were given new guidelines for silent reading time. The teacher purchased small baskets for each table of students. Approximately a dozen books were placed in the baskets. Students were to choose books from the basket for their silent reading material each day. The baskets were rotated to the next table on the following day, with the book titles being changed weekly. The students then were directed to stay in their seats for their silent reading time, which put a stronger emphasis on the importance of focused silent reading. Next, during the students' daily morning work period, the teacher/researcher added

individual journal writing to their choices. The journal stories, when finished, could be taken to the site's publishing center to be typed and bound by parent volunteers. During this initial week, the teacher also began bringing to class an item of interest to share with the students. Newspaper stories, postcards and recipes were some of the items read. As for various language arts strategies to be directly instructed, the teacher began a unit that week on letter writing. The format and procedure for letters were modeled by the teacher and then practiced as a class and individually for a six week period of time. A lesson utilizing picture clues to activate the students' prior knowledge was the beginning for various reading strategy instruction. All of the activities presented during this first week continued throughout the complete intervention period.

Beginning the second week of the intervention, the students at Site B began collecting daily information in their journals to be used in a class newsletter written every Friday. In this way, the teacher was able to give instruction in informational writing strategies. The initial literature circle was also begun utilizing the theme of "Back to School". Additional themes were introduced and developed throughout the intervention. An "After-Lunch Bunch" was also initiated three times per week. During this activity, students would rotate meeting with the teacher and a small group of classmates to discuss their various silent reading selections or silent writing products. Additional reading and writing strategy instruction utilizing various graphic organizers and visualization techniques continued daily. The formal spelling strategy instruction likewise began and continued daily throughout the intervention period as did all the activities noted.

Midway through the intervention, a word wall with daily practice activities was established and the second grade students began a "buddy reading" program with a kindergarten class. During their weekly visit to the library, the students would choose one book that they would practice during the week to read with their kindergarten partner. On Fridays, the class would go to the

kindergarten room for the last time period of the day to share their reading choices. All the above mentioned activities were utilized and interwoven throughout the intervention period in hopes of achieving a "High Quality Classroom" (Cunningham and Allington, 1999).

A few activities, however, were not implemented for various reasons usually related to time constraints. For example, the Listening/Reading/Transfer (LRT) lessons were not used. Instead, the global concept of teaching students a strategy through explanation, modeling and immediate practice was used daily. Instead of the teacher modeling writing strategies to the whole class, individual instruction was given to the students as they wrote their daily paragraphs of ideas for the weekly class newsletter.

At Site C, the students in the kindergarten classroom were actively engaged in real-world reading and writing activities. These activities were planned to simulate a home environment where reading and writing are everyday activities. During a 45 minute choice time each day, students were exposed to a wide variety of reading materials from which they could self-select what was of interest to them. In the classroom quiet area, which was furnished with carpet and comfortable bean bag chairs and pillows, a variety of printed materials including magazines, big books, trade books, and emergent reading books was readily available. In the writing area, a variety of writing instruments and materials was offered for the students to use during choice time. These included a large white board with dry erase markers, small chalkboards with chalk, markers, crayons, and an assortment of paper.

Each week, the kindergarten students were paired with a sixth grade reading buddy for one-on-one reading. Each pair remained together as partners for the duration of the intervention. Half of each class traded rooms to alleviate overcrowding in the kindergarten classroom. This program lasted for 30 to 40 minutes each week and included related literacy activities in addition

to reading. The action plan called for reading every week, but this was changed to include a variety of activities, such as games and bookmaking, on alternate weeks. It was found that the kindergarten students needed more active participation to maintain their interest, especially in the early weeks of the project. Writing was often included in the reading buddy activities, with the kindergarten students dictating a response to the literature or a creative story for the sixth graders to record.

Daily shared reading time was conducted at Site C. This began as a 10 minute reading time, but was later extended to 15 to 20 minutes as the children became able to sustain attention for a longer period. During this time, the teacher was able to draw attention to the details of print, the sound of language, the artwork and illustrations in the books. The teacher was also able to help the students recognize different types of books, such as fiction and non-fiction, and to help the students relate the literature to their own experiences. During choice time, the teacher, teacher aides, or sixth grade helpers worked with individual students on independent reading. Strategies good readers use were introduced during shared reading and then reinforced in these individual reading sessions. Students were able to check out small emergent reading books to take home with a letter to parents. (Appendix Y)

The action plan called for 10 minutes of RAP (Reading Any Place) each day when the students would read or pretend-read alone or with a partner. This part of the intervention was eliminated after attempting it in several different ways. The students' young age and lack of social skills interfered with their ability to focus on a book independently. It is possible that RAP would work better later in the school year when the children are more mature.

Students at Site C participated in a variety of writing activities during the intervention. These included individual journals, shared writing time with the teacher modeling good writing,

stories dictated to an adult or older child, and class books with students' dictated pages combined to make a book. Journal writing was done two or three times a week, rather than daily. Shared writing was done once a week, and students' dictated stories were written every other week. Class books were related to units of study and were written monthly. Time constraints and the need to schedule other activities in a half-day kindergarten program made these changes necessary.

Strategies to assist students in spelling and decoding words were presented throughout the intervention. These included activities for building letter/sound learning, activities to increase phonological awareness, and activities to improve word recognition and seeing patterns in words. Although all activities were included, the main emphasis was on letter/sound learning. The students' need for movement and hands-on activities was incorporated into the teaching of letters and sounds through activities such as forming letters out of playdough and working in groups to form letters using their bodies.

The students at Site C were involved in several thematic units to access their prior knowledge and increase their vocabulary. Some of the thematic units presented were farm animals, apples, zoo animals, pumpkins, signs of autumn, and nutrition. Vocabulary was increased through the use of webs, word walls, posters, KWL charts, and journals. Children were encouraged to bring in items from home related to the unit, and the teacher also brought items to show and display. Field trips were organized related to several units. These included trips to a local farm park, nature center, and zoo. Activities before and after the trips were designed to access prior knowledge and expand vocabulary based on the experience.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

At site A, a fourth grade classroom, the teacher/researcher gave a posttest of 300 sight words. (Appendix A) A record was kept for the number of words missed. The pre-intervention and post intervention results were divided into four score classes and are represented in Figure 4.

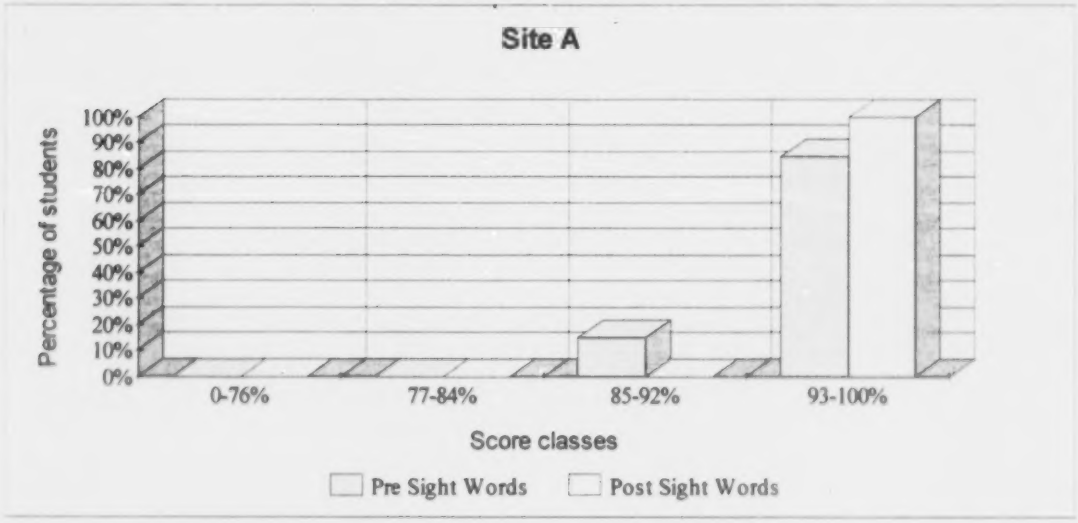

Figure 4. Number of students in each score class for the pretest and posttest of sight words. (February 1999)

These data show that the intervention had a positive effect regarding the students inadequately developed literacy skills. All of the students tested were able to read at least 93% of the 300 sight words. This was a 15% increase over the pre-intervention test results. There were not any students who scored in any of the first three score classes.

Also at site A, the teacher/researcher tape recorded each student reading a selected passage from the fourth grade basal reader. A running record of errors was made for each reading passage. The number of words in the passage was then divided by the number of errors to find the percent of accurately read words. The pre-intervention and post intervention results are shown in Figure 5.

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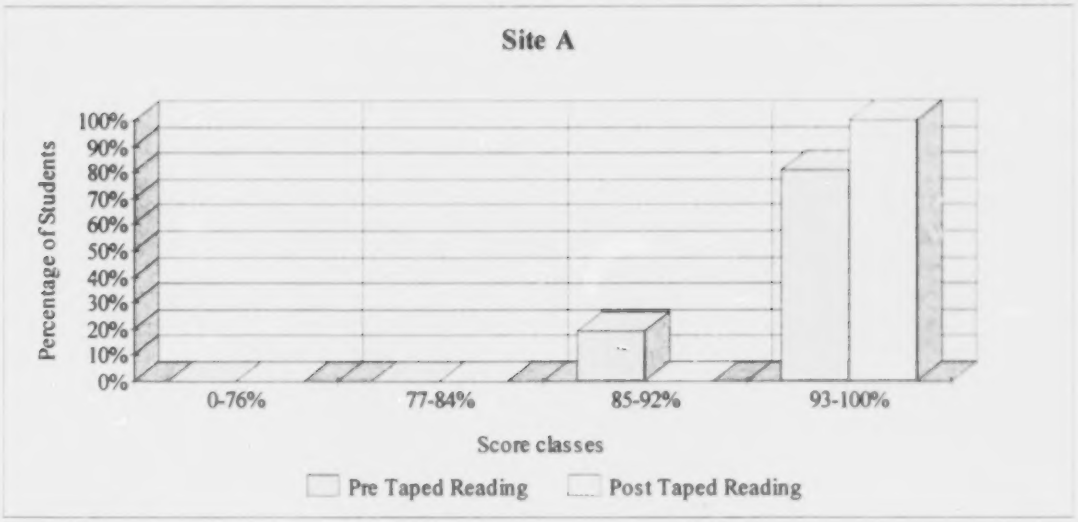

Figure 5. Number of students in each score class for the pretest and posttest of the taped reading selection. (February 1999)

Prior to the intervention, 81% of the fourth grade students were able to read a passage while making few mistakes. In addition, 19% of the students scored in the third score class. After the intervention, all students scored in the highest score class. As expected, the posttest findings revealed a minimum increase in the students' basic sight word knowledge along with their ability to decode words. The minimum increase is related to the high rate of success in the pretest. Decoding was not a major component of the problem.

To test for the intervention's effectiveness in regards to the students' reading comprehension, the teacher/researcher gave a reading passage followed by comprehension questions. The students were given 20 minutes to read the sample and answer the questions that followed. The results are displayed in Figure 6.

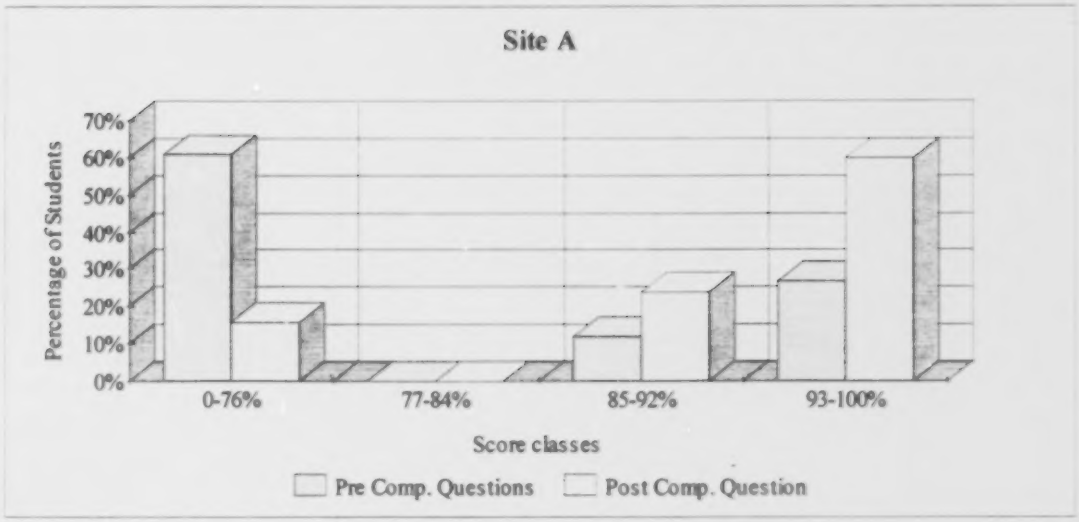

Figure 6. Number of students in each score class for the pretest and posttest of the comprehension questions. (February 1999)

Of the 25 students at site A, 60% were able to answer at least 93% of the comprehension questions given from a reading passage. This was an increase from 27% to 60%. There was an increase from 12% to 24% in the 85-92% score class. There was no change when it came to the 77-84% score class. The percentage of students at site A in the 0-76% score class dramatically decreased from 61% to 16%.

At Site B, a second grade classroom, the examiner presented a post intervention test of 136 sight word flashcards to individual students. (Appendix Z) A tally was kept for the number of words missed. The pre-intervention and post intervention percentage results divided into the district's grading scale score classes are represented in Figure 7.

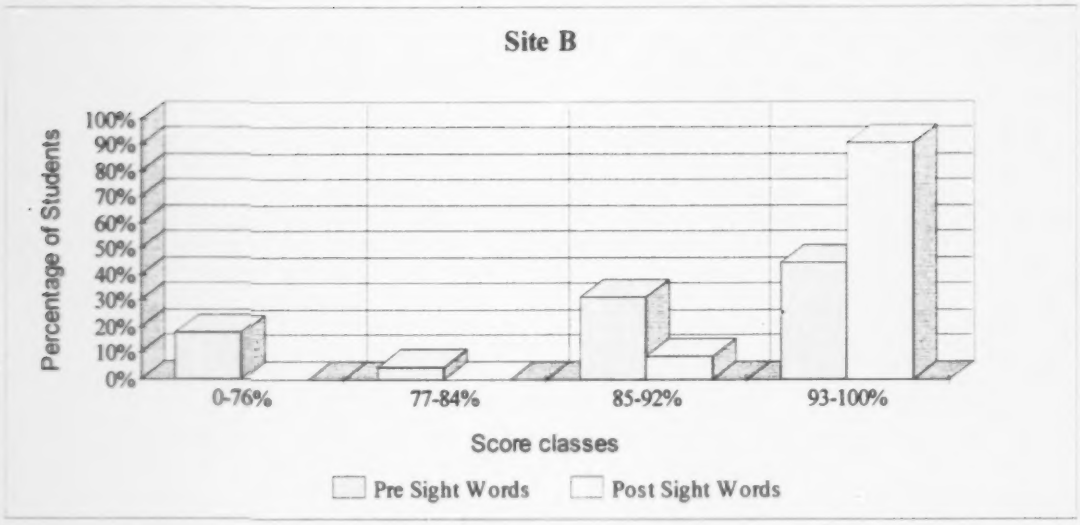

Figure 7. Number of students in each score class for the pretest and posttest of the sight words. (February 1999)

The "High Quality Classroom" (Cunningham & Allington 1999) intervention appears to have positively effected the students' literacy skills in the area of sight word knowledge. In the pretest, 46% of the students were able to identify at least 84 out of 90 sight words presented. In the post intervention testing, 91% of the students were able to identify at least 127 out of 136 sight words. Additional sight words were presented during the post intervention testing due to the students' desire to "show off". In addition to the positive effect on literacy skills, all the students demonstrated the positive attribute of being highly motivated by their success. They wanted to share their new word knowledge with the examiner. In the original sight word test, there were 18% of the students who scored in the below average category along with one student (4%) who scored in the average range. After the intervention, however, there were no students who scored in the average or below average range.

Also at site B, the examiner again tape recorded each student reading a selected passage. This selection was at the second grade, six month level which corresponded with the school calendar date of the post intervention testing. A running record of errors was kept for each reading. These percentage results again were divided among four score classes correlating to the district's grading scale. The pre-intervention and post intervention findings are illustrated in Figure 8.

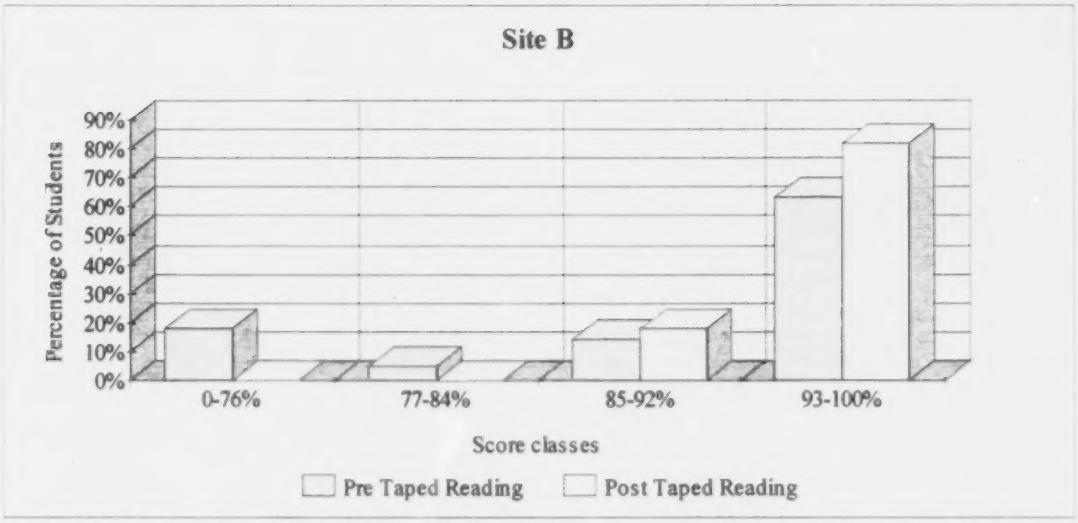

Figure 8. Number of students in each score class for the pretest and posttest of the taped reading selection. (February 1999)

Prior to the intervention, 64% of the second grade students at site B were able to read a sample passage while making few mistakes. Following the intervention, all of the students were able to read a grade level sample passage with four or fewer mistakes. Initially, there were 18% of the students scoring in the below average range. After the intervention, there were no students scoring in the average or below average range. Again a significant improvement in literacy skills was demonstrated. This improvement, in turn, appeared to lead to more student engagement in their learning. As noted when analyzing the pre-intervention testing results, there was only a

small percentage of students needing intensive sight word and decoding strategy instruction. Following the intervention these same students had achieved grade level or better.

To test for the intervention's effects on reading comprehension, the instructor at Site B gave a comprehension worksheet to the second grade students. As in the pre-intervention testing, the students were again given 30 minutes to read the sample and answer comprehension questions that followed. Correct answers were tallied and are shown in comparison to the earlier results in Figure 9.

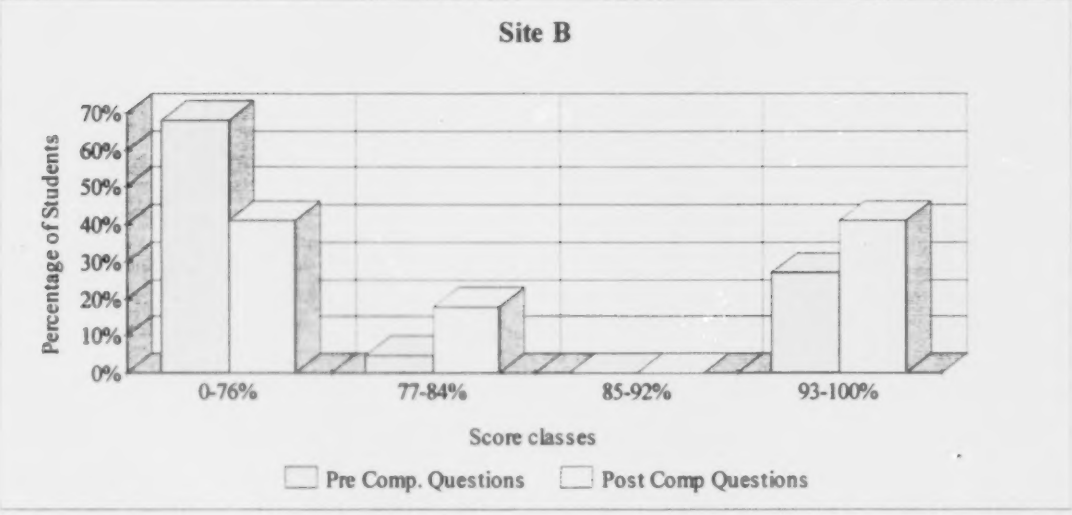

Figure 9. Number of students in each score class for the pretest and posttest of the comprehension questions. (February 1999)

When the students' comprehension was tested prior to the intervention, 68% of the second graders scored below average. Subsequent to the intervention, 41% of the students continued to score below average. There was some improvement in comprehension skills which may be due to the students' improved decoding skills and increased word knowledge as seen in the other test results.

At sites A and B, the fourth and second grade students respectively, were again given the following writing prompt orally and in written form: Write about something you and a friend do together. There was no time limit given for the students to complete the assignment. All of the students completed the writing task within a 35 minute time period. Each writing sample was scored on the same 32 point scale as the pre-intervention samples. (Appendix D) These scores were again divided into six score classes. Pre-intervention and post intervention results are displayed in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3

Pre and post test writing scores for the targeted class in February 1999.

Site A	**Below Average**			**Average**		**Above Average**
Writing Scores	**0-6**	**7-11**	**12-16**	**17-21**	**22-26**	**27-32**
Pre intervention	0%	42%	39%	15%	4%	0%
Post intervention	0%	4%	36%	32%	20%	8%

The students at site A showed an increase when it came to writing scores. The number of students in the below average categories decreased from 81% to 40%. Prior to the intervention, 19% of the students scored in the average range where as after the intervention 52% scored in this category. There were no students who scored in the above average range prior to the intervention. However, there was an increase from zero to eight percent in this category after the intervention.

Table 4

Pre and post test writing scores for the targeted class in February 1999.

Site B	Below Average			Average		Above Average
Writing Scores	**0-6**	**7-11**	**12-16**	**17-21**	**22-26**	**27-32**
Pre intervention	9%	64%	27%	0%	0%	0%
Post intervention	0%	18%	5%	41%	27%	9%

At site B, a positive effect on writing skills was shown after the "High Quality Classroom" (Cunningham & Allington, 1999) intervention was implemented. Prior to the intervention at site B, all of the second grade students scored in the below average category for writing skills. Following the intervention, there were only 23% of the students scoring in this range. The main weakness for these students was in the area of support. They wrote very few supporting details in their paragraphs. The remaining 77% of the students would be considered writing at or above grade level.

Kindergarten students at site C were presented with 40 sight words and were given 2 seconds to respond. These were the same 40 sight words that were given in the pre-intervention test.

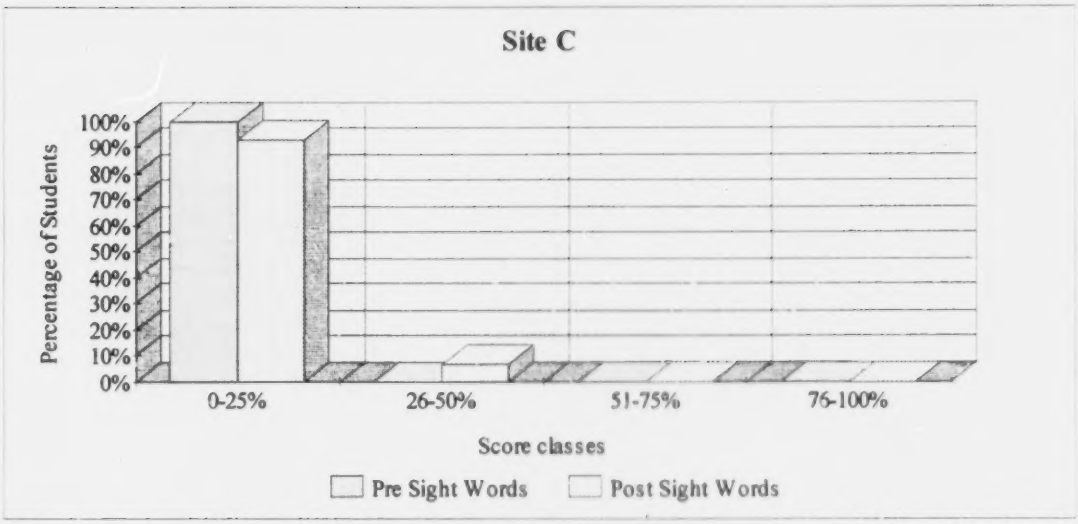

Figure 10. Number of students in each score class for the pretest and posttest of sight words. (February 1999)

The data shown in Figure 10 indicates that 93% of the students could name 25% or less of the sight words, while 7 % of the students could name 26-50% of the words. Of the 93% of the students in the lowest score class, it should be noted that 36% of these students named from 8 to 11 words. In the pre-intervention testing, the maximum number of words any student could name was 2 and 63% of the students were unable to name any words.

Anecdotal records indicted several changes in the strategies employed by the students as they attempted to name the sight words. Most students made some effort to use the beginning consonant sound to decode the word and then named another word beginning with the same sound, for example, "sun" for "see". This showed progress in the students' understanding of letter/sound connections. Random naming of letters instead of words was noted in only one student and one other student resorted to naming things in the room. These two coping strategies, naming letters and naming things in the room, were seen more frequently in the pre-intervention testing when the students were faced with this challenging task. Most students were

observed to be more confident and comfortable as they attempted the same task after the intervention. Although the students did not show a marked increase in the number of sight words recognized, there was a positive change in the way they approached the task.

When presented with flashcards of capital and lower case letters, all students at site C showed an increase in the number of letters recognized. The results are displayed in Figures 11 and 12.

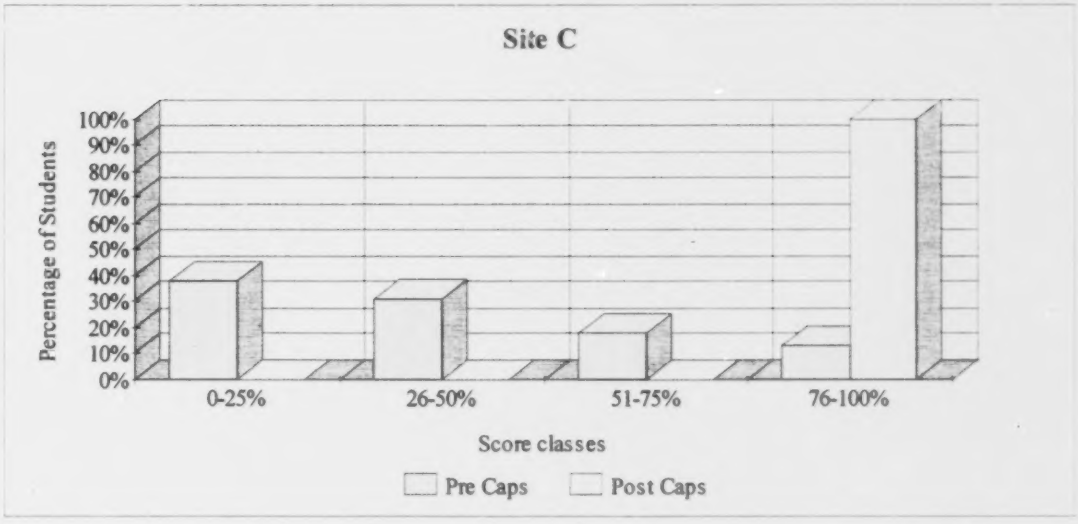

Figure 11. Number of students in each score class for the pretest and posttest of capital letters. (February 1999)

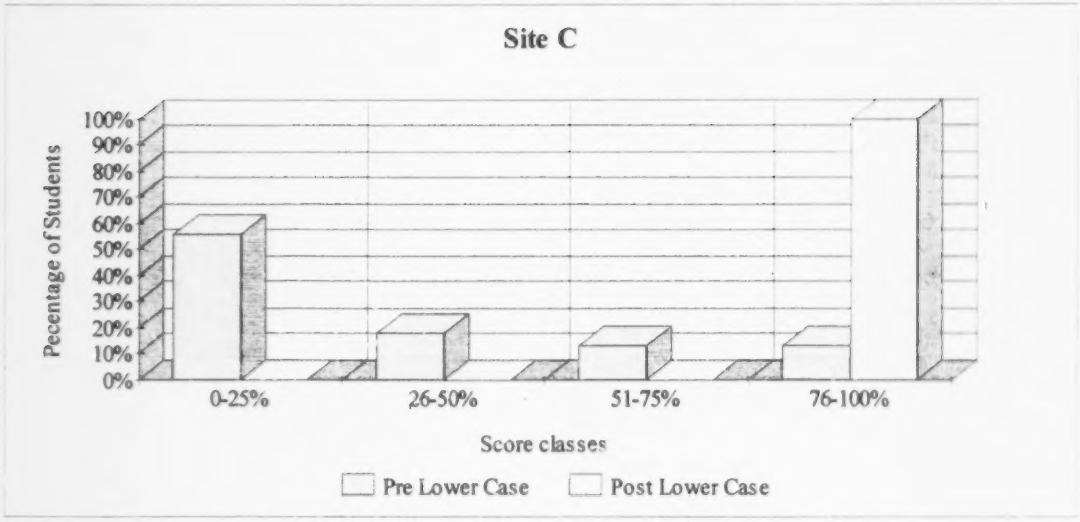

Figure 12. Number of students in each score class for the pretest and posttest of lower case letters. (February 1999)

All of the students were able to name over 80% of both capital and lower case letters. The examiner also noted that one-third of the students were able to name all capital and lower case letters, compared to no students being able to do so before the intervention.

The students at site C were given a writing prompt about friends and were asked to draw a picture and write a story about a friend. The results are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5

Pre and post test writing scores for the targeted class in February 1999.

Site C	Below Average			Average		Above Average
Writing Scores	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Pre intervention	13%	0%	87%	0%	0%	0%
Post intervention	13%	0%	0%	54%	13%	20%

In the post intervention writing sample, 87% of the students scored in the top half of the scoring rubric, compared to 0% in the top half before the intervention. Many students wrote words in their story, whereas prior to the intervention they wrote only scribbles and letters. In addition, 20% of the students wrote a sentence to describe their picture, while no students were able to write a sentence before the intervention. Two students drew pictures unrelated to the prompt. This number was the same in the pre-intervention writing sample, but it should be noted that it was not the same two students who were off-topic both times. It was noted that the students' writing was more legible, with most letters being formed correctly.

Kindergarten students at site C were scored on a checklist for literacy skills. They showed improvement in all areas of print awareness, with several skills showing large gains. For example, the number of students able to show the title of a book increased from 31% to 100% and the number of students able to point to one word increased from 50% to 93%.

Another part of the literacy checklist involved giving one word to rhyme with the words "cat", "bell", and "hand". Prior to the intervention, only two students could give a rhyming word for "cat" and no students could give a rhyming word for "bell" or "hand". Following the intervention, 100% of students could give a rhyming word for "cat", 80% could give a rhyming word for "bell", and 93% could give a rhyming word for "hand". These results indicate an improved understanding of rhyming words after the intervention.

Finally, the literacy checklist included four words to identify from environmental print. These were McDonald's®, Coke®, Kroger's®, and Pizza Hut®. All students could identify McDonald's® both before and after the intervention. It is interesting to note that the number of students who could identify Kroger's® increased, but the number who could identify Coke® and

Pizza Hut® decreased slightly. It could be inferred that as the students have become more aware of print all around them, these familiar environmental words have become less significant to them.

Conclusions and Recommendations

When assessing the merits of a "High Quality Classroom" (Cunningham & Allington), many positive effects emerge. At all three targeted primary classrooms involved in this study, there was a marked improvement in all the students' literacy skills. The increase in students' knowledge of basic sight words for the second and fourth grade students is believed to be due to the word walls displayed in both classrooms. The specific teaching of spelling patterns and decoding skills were also thought to positively effect the students' overall word knowledge. One possible theory that supports the improvement in the students' overall reading ability at both sites focuses on the increased accessibility of books. When the students had books more readily available to them, they tended to read more which is a form of practice. The teacher/researchers believe that with more practice the students became better readers.

When examining the positive improvement in the students' reading and writing abilities at sites A and B, additional benefits were noted. Students were observed being much more enthusiastic about their daily work. Much of this could be attributed to a higher level of success than many of the students had ever achieved before. The teacher/researchers believe that by teaching the students additional literacy strategies, the students began to feel more successful which led them to being more confident and motivated to try new tasks.

In the at-risk kindergarten class at site C, the creation of a literacy-rich environment and the implementation of the intervention strategies also had positive results. The students showed marked gains in letter recognition, writing ability, and literacy skills. Exposure to books and print on a daily basis in a home simulation environment increased their familiarity with the world of

words and their confidence in their own ability to learn to read. In a reading interview following the intervention, more than half of the students said they could now read, and several more who said they could not yet read thought it would be easy to learn. Students also changed in their attitudes toward the purpose of reading. Before the intervention only 13% of students said that people read to learn. After the intervention, 47% indicated this belief. By seeing reading used daily in the classroom as a means of gaining information, as well as an enjoyable activity, the students changed some of their previous ideas about reading.

The emphasis placed on activities to build letter/sound connections was beneficial for the students, as evidenced by the positive results in their letter recognition posttest and their use of beginning consonant sounds in attempting to decode sight words. Several students who knew only two to four letters at the start of the intervention knew almost all the letters at the conclusion. As they began to recognize letters and then words, their enthusiasm and confidence increased. They were excited when they could point out a letter or a word they knew in a book or on signs they saw in the hall.

Shared reading and writing activities provided valuable modeling for teaching reading and writing strategies. Individual and small group reading time with an adult or older student gave the students an opportunity to pretend-read or practice their new independent reading skills. For the at-risk students, these experiences may not be part of their daily lives at home. Providing these literacy experiences at school in a simulated home environment is an important step in preparing them to become successful readers and writers.

In addition, the kindergarten students' enthusiasm and excitement about reading and writing increased during the course of the intervention. This was evident in their comments and questions. Monday was "Reading Buddy Day" and often the students arrived in the morning

asking if this was the day for buddies, even though the buddies did not arrive until 2:10 P.M. The same enthusiasm was evident for journals. These two parts of the intervention seemed to play the most important roles for the students and should definitely be included in the development of a literacy-rich environment.

In making recommendations, the teacher/researchers would suggest that the scope of the intervention at all sites should be narrowed. In attempting to create a literacy-rich environment, the possibilities for beneficial activities appeared to be endless. Many ideas and plans were included in the Project Action Plan, but it was difficult to actually implement all of the activities planned, along with other parts of the curriculum. This was especially true in the half-day kindergarten class, where the actual instructional time was only two hours and fifteen minutes per day. To include art, music, library, computer lab, math, science, and social studies, along with the planned literacy activities became a formidable task at times. Also, activities were planned with more frequency than was actually possible. In the daily schedule of a half-day kindergarten program, dealing with time constraints was the fundamental problem. At the second and fourth grade sites addressing other curricular requirements was the critical factor. Some activities originally planned to be accomplished daily at all sites needed to be adjusted to two or three times a week. It would be better to plan fewer activities and to do those activities with greater frequency. Repetition and extension of activities greatly increases learning for all students.

At sites A and B, the teacher/researchers would recommend additional preparation of units prior to implementing the intervention. If the other curricular requirements could be integrated with the literacy development activities, more time overall would be spent developing the students' literacy skills.

Another recommendation, specific to site C, would be to include some form of parent education on literacy development as part of the Project Action Plan. From the reading interviews conducted before the intervention, it was learned that only 75% of the kindergarten students were read stories at home. In the post intervention data, 100% of the students were being read stories at home. Parent education was not formally included in the intervention, but occasionally articles and pamphlets on literacy development were sent home with the students. Reminders to read to the children, to go to the library, and to listen to the children read their small emergent reading books were included in the weekly newsletter. Since parents play such a critical role in the students' literacy development, it is recommended that a workshop, family reading night, or short information session be held for parents at the start of the intervention. This could also be an important consideration for any future sites depending upon the site's parental participation.

Overall, when reflecting on the completed study, the teacher/researchers strongly encourage their peers to develop and implement the "High Quality Classroom" (Cunningham & Allington, 1999) at their individual sites.

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Appendices

Appendix A
Basic Sight Word List

Site A Pre and Post Intervention

the	of	and	a	to	in	is
you	that	it	he	was	for	on
are	as	with	his	they	I	at
be	this	have	from	or	one	had
by	words	but	not	what	all	were
we	when	your	can	said	there	use
an	each	which	she	do	how	their
if	will	up	other	about	out	many
then	them	these	so	some	her	would
make	like	him	into	time	has	look
two	more	write	go	see	number	no
way	could	people	my	than	first	water
been	called	who	oil	its	now	find
long	down	day	did	get	come	made
may	part	over	new	sound	take	only
little	work	know	place	years	live	me
back	give	most	very	after	things	our
just	name	good	sentence	man	think	say
great	where	help	through	much	before	line
right	too	means	old	any	same	tell
boy	following	came	want	show	also	around
form	three	small	set	put	end	does
another	well	large	must	big	even	such
because	turned	here	why	asked	went	men
read	need	land	different	home	us	move
try	kind	hand	picture	again	change	off
play	spell	air	away	animals	house	point
page	letters	mother	answer	found	study	still
learn	should	American	world	high	every	near
add	food	between	own	below	country	plants
last	school	father	keep	trees	never	started
city	earth	eyes	light	thought	head	under
story	saw	left	don't	few	while	miss
along	might	close	something	seemed	next	hard
open	example	beginning	life	always	those	both
paper	together	got	group	often	run	until
important	children	side	feet	car	miles	night
walked	white	sea	began	grow	took	river
four	carry	state	once	book	hear	stop
without	second	later	idea	enough	eat	face
watch	far	Indians	really	almost	let	above
girl	sometimes	mountains	cut	your	talk	soon

list	song	being	leave	family	it's	
Site B						
the	of	and	a	to	in	is
you	that	it	he	was	for	on
are	as	with	his	they	I	at
be	this	have	from	or	one	had
by	words	but	not	what	all	were
we	when	your	can	said	there	use
an	each	which	she	do	how	their
if	will	up	other	about	out	many
then	them	these	so	some	her	would
make	like	him	into	time	has	look
two	more	write	go	see	number	no
way	could	people	my	than	first	water
been	called	who	oil	its	now	

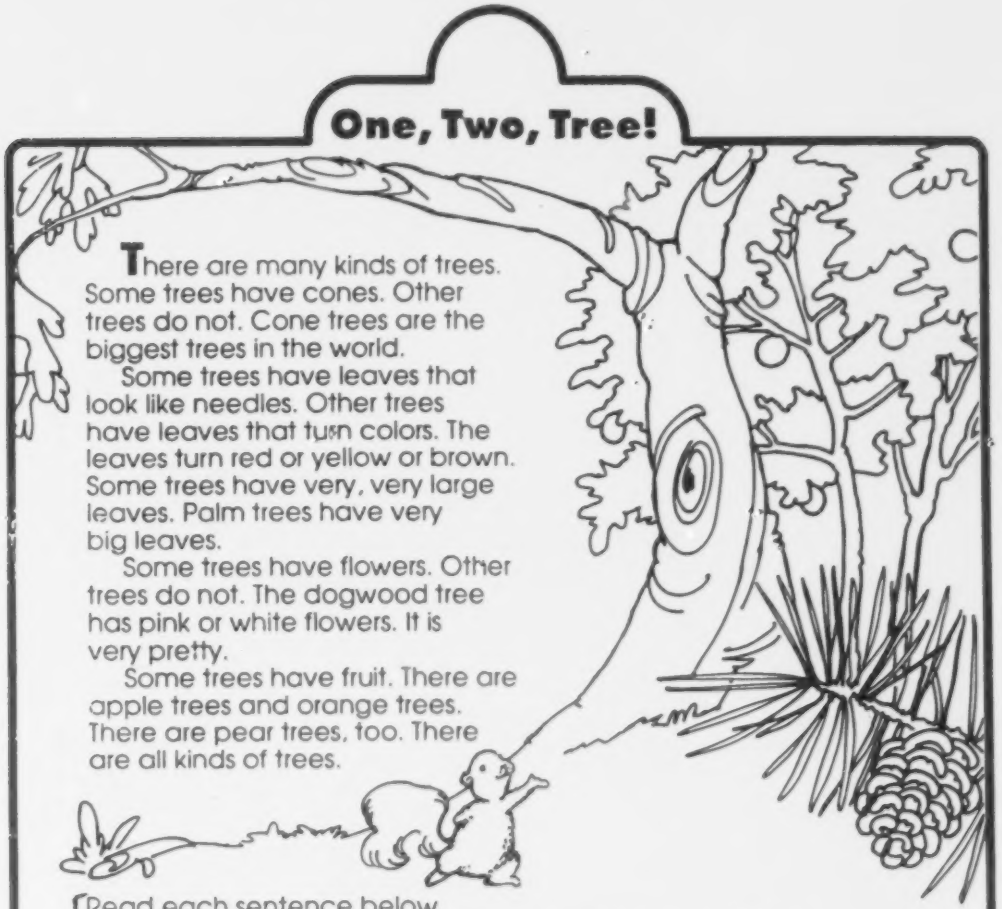
Appendix B
Reading Sample

On his way home from school Leo stopped to look in the pet store window. Sometimes there were puppies tumbling over each other or curled up in balls, sleeping. Sometimes there were kittens—striped ones and spotted ones—so little, they looked as if they had just opened their eyes. At Easter time the window was filled with fat white rabbits. And once there was a parrot who sat on a stand and screamed, "Hello Mac."

Comprehension Questions

1. Where was Leo coming from when he stopped to look in the pet store window?
2. Describe the kittens in the pet store window.
3. Why do you think the pet store put rabbits in the window?
4. How many animals different kinds of animals had been in the pet store window?
5. Why do you think Leo stopped to look in the pet store window? Why?

Appendix C
Comprehension Worksheet



One, Two, Tree!

There are many kinds of trees. Some trees have cones. Other trees do not. Cone trees are the biggest trees in the world.

Some trees have leaves that look like needles. Other trees have leaves that turn colors. The leaves turn red or yellow or brown. Some trees have very, very large leaves. Palm trees have very big leaves.

Some trees have flowers. Other trees do not. The dogwood tree has pink or white flowers. It is very pretty.

Some trees have fruit. There are apple trees and orange trees. There are pear trees, too. There are all kinds of trees.

Read each sentence below.
Write the correct word on each line to finish the sentence.

This story is about _____.

The main idea of this story is that _____

_____.

Another good title for this story could be **Kinds of** _____.

Palm trees have very large _____.

Cone trees are the _____ trees in the world.

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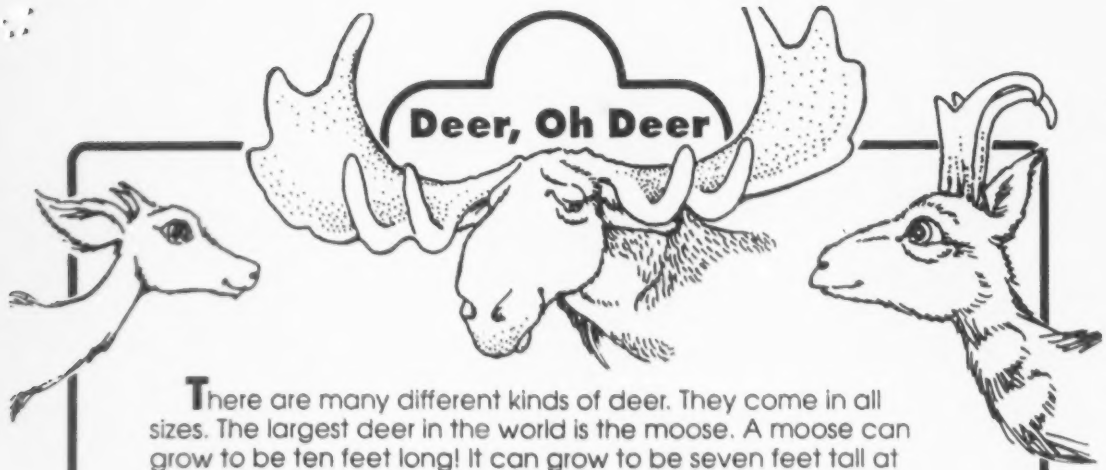

Deer, Oh Deer

There are many different kinds of deer. They come in all sizes. The largest deer in the world is the moose. A moose can grow to be ten feet long! It can grow to be seven feet tall at the shoulder. That means that its head is even higher up. A moose could look down on a basketball player!

The antelope is another deer. It is small. It is only four feet long and three feet tall. But the antelope is fast. It is the fastest of all the deer. An antelope can run 40 miles an hour. You can't run that fast. You can't even pedal a bike that fast!

The smallest deer in the world is called the pudu (POO doo). It is only two feet high at the shoulder. You are a lot taller than that. The pudu is smaller than a big dog.

Read each sentence below.
Write the correct word on each line to finish the sentence.

This story is about _____.

Another good title for this story could be **From the Biggest to the** _____.

The main idea of this story is that _____

_____.

The first paragraph tells about the _____.

The second paragraph tells about the _____.

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Appendix D
Writing Rubric

Features	1	2	3	4	5	6
Focus Degree to which main idea/theme or point of view is clear and maintained	Absent; unclear; insufficient writing to ascertain maintenance	Attempted; subject unclear or confusing; main points unclear or shifts; resembles brainstorming insufficient writing to sustain issue	Subject clear/ position is not "underpromise, overdeliver;" "overpromise, underdeliver"; infer; two or more positions without unifying statement; abrupt ending	Bare bones, position clear; main point(s) clear and maintained; prompt dependent, launch into support w/o preview	Position announced; points generally previewed; has a closing	All main points are specified and maintained; effective closing; narrative event clear, importance/ significance stated or inferred
Support Degree to which main point/elements are elaborated and/or explained by specific evidence and detailed reasons	No support; insufficient writing	Support attempted; ambiguous/ confusing; unrelated list; insufficient writing	Some points elaborated; most general/ some questionable; may be a list of related specifics; sufficiency?	Some second order elaboration; some are general; sufficiency ok- not much depth	Most points elaborated by second-order or more	All major points elaborated with specific second-order support, balance/ evenness
Organization Degree to which logical flow of ideas and text plan are clear and connected	No plan; insufficient writing to ascertain maintenance	Attempted; plan can be inferred; no evidence of paragraphing; confusion prevails; insufficient writing	Plan noticeable Inappropriate paragraphing; major disgressions; sufficiency?	Plan is evident; minor disgressions; some cohesion and coherence from relating to topic	Plan is clear; most points logically connected; coherence and cohesion demonstrated; most points appropriately paragraphed	All points logically connected and signaled with transitions and/ or other cohesive devices; all appropriately paragraphed; no disgressions
Conventions Use of conventions of standard English	Many errors, cannot read, problems with sentence construction; insufficient writing to ascertain maintenance	Many major errors; confusion; insufficient writing	Some major errors, many minor; sentence construction below mastery	Minimally developed; few major errors, some minor, but meaning unimpaired; mastery of sentence construction	A few minor errors, but no more than one major error	No major errors, few or no minor errors
Integration Evaluation of the paper based on a global judgement of how effectively the paper as a whole uses basic features to address the assignment	Barely deals with topic; does not present most or all features insufficient writing	Attempts to address assignment; some confusion or disjointedness insufficient writing	Partially developed; some or one feature not developed, but all present; reader inference required	Only the essentials present; paper is simple, informative, and clear	Developed paper, each feature evident, but not equally developed	Fully developed paper, all features evident and equally well developed

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Focus	1	2	3	4	5	6
Support/Elaboration	1	2	3	4	5	6
Organization	1	2	3	4	5	6
Conventions (Mechanics/Usage)	----------Add 1---------- 1	2	3	----------Add 2---------- 4	5	6
Integration (x 2)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Prompt _____			Student _____			Score ___

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Appendix E
At-risk Screening Instruments' Point System

Kindergarten Interview Summary

Name: _____
CA: _____ Date: _____

	Points
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test III: CA: _____ AE: _____ SS: _____	/15
Speech/Language Status: existing IEP: Y N type of IEP: A L A/L O rescreen: fall 98 _____ fall 99 _____ evaluation recommended: Y N expressive language _____ language processing _____ auditory closure _____ digit span _____ articulation _____ fluency _____ voice _____	/15
Motor: Dominance eyes: hand: foot: R L M R L M R L M Balance: Right Y N Left: Y N Hop: Right Y N Left: Y N Ball: Toss to me: Y N Toss to self: Y N Catch: Y N Stays on task: Y N	/10
Child Interview: **Shapes:** Shapes: Y N Counting: 4 7 10 Rote counts to _____ Grasp: L R Adequate: Y N Colors: R Y Bla. G P O Br. Blu. Writes name: Y N Names letters in name: Y N Cuts: Y N Copies shapes: Y N Follows directions: Y N On task: Y N Verbal Exchange: Y N	/30
Print Concepts:	/10
Parent Survey:	/25
Total Points:	/105

Appendix F
Word List Used for Kindergarten Sight Word Assessment

A	and	away	big	blue	can
come	find	for	funny	go	help
here	I	in	is	it	jump
little	look	make	me	my	not
one	play	red	run	said	see
the	three	to	two	up	we
where	yellow	you			

Appendix G
Checklist for Kindergarten Literacy

Name _____ Date _____

Evaluator _____ Score _____

Print Awareness

_____1. Show me the front of the book.
_____2. Show me the back of the book.
_____3. Show me the title of the book.
_____4. Show me the picture on this page.
_____5. Show me where I would start to read. (top to bottom)
_____6. Show me which way I should go when I read. (left to right)
_____7. Where do I go after that? (return sweep)
_____8. Show me one letter.
_____9. Show me one word.
____10. Show me a capital letter.
____11. Can you tell me what this (.) is for?
____12. Show me the first word in this sentence.
____13. Show me a long word.
____14. Show me a short word.
____15. Can you find your name? (among 6 names)

Tell me a word that rhymes with:
____16. cat
____17. bell
____18. hand

Tell me what these words say: (show logo)
____19. McDonald's
____20. Coke
____21. Kroger's
____22. Pizza Hut

Appendix H
Kindergarten Writing Rubric

Prompt: _____

Comments: _____

1 – Unrelated Picture
2 – Related Picture
3 – Related Picture with Scribbling/Letters
4 – Related Picture with Words
5 – Related Picture with Phrases
6 – Related Picture with Sentence (s)
7 – Related Picture with Sentence (s) containing a Capital and a Period

Student: _____ Total: _____

Score: _____

Appendix I
Printed Materials Available in Kindergarten Classroom

Big Books
Picture books, fiction and non-fiction
Small books at emergent literacy level
Recipes
Poems on charts
Fingerplays on charts
Language experience stories on charts
Songs on charts
Dictionaries
Magazines
Newspapers and articles from newspapers
Multiple copies of books with story tapes
Song tapes
Class books
Cereal boxes and other food containers
Traffic signs
Posters on science and social studies topics

Appendix J
Writing Instruments and Materials Available in Kindergarten Classroom

Paper of different colors, textures, and sizes, both lined and unlined
Dry erase boards
Dry erase markers
Pencils
Colored pencils
Pens
Crayons
Markers
Individual chalkboards
Large chalkboards
Chalk
Erasers
Magic slates
Paper stapled together into blank books
Notebooks
Memo pads
Advertisement stamps and stickers
Envelopes
Alphabet cards
Alphabet charts
List of student names
Stapler and staples

Appendix K
Sample Activities for Reading Buddies

Letter Bingo. Partners share a game board and mark the letters as they are called. Sixth grade buddies assist when kindergarten students need help.

Name Bingo. Game boards are prepared with nine students' names on each card. Partners mark names as they are called, with assistance from sixth graders as needed.

Leaf Stories. Each kindergarten student chooses a pressed fall leaf. The leaf is glued onto a paper and the kindergarten student dictates a creative story about the leaf. Sixth grade buddies write the story and read it back.

Four Square Letter Boxes. A large piece of construction paper is divided into four equal squares with crayon lines. In each box, the buddies write the same consonant letter and draw a picture of something that begins with that sound.

All About Me Stories. Each partner is given a large body outline to cut and color, adding clothes and facial features. On an "All About Me" story outline, the partners each complete sentences such as, "My favorite food is…", "My favorite book is…", and "When I grow up I want to be a …". Stories are glued onto the body's middle section.

Handy Book Reports. Partners are given a book report form printed on a large hand. Each finger represents one part of the book report, such as title, author, main characters, story setting, and story ending. After the sixth grade buddy reads three books to the kindergarten student, they select a favorite book and complete the book report.

Books on Stage. Partners choose a familiar book to read. They then create an original drama to present to the class showing a favorite part of the book. Classmates may guess the title of the book.

Snowman Stories. Partners create a snowman together using paper plates, construction paper, crepe paper and other scrap materials. The kindergarten student then dictates a first person story to the sixth grade buddy telling the snowman's name and the snowman's favorite winter activities.

Appendix L
Conventions of Print

Directionality (demonstrates)
- Left-to-right page sequence
- Left-to-right in sequence
- Return sweep
- Top to bottom
- Beginning of book
- End of book

Reading Concepts (points to)
- Print tells the story
- One-to-one correspondence

Book Concepts (can identify)
- Cover of book
- Title
- Title page

Words/letters (can find)
- A letter
- A word
- The first word on the page
- The last word on the page
- A first letter
- A last letter
- A capital letter
- A small letter
- Can name some words in isolation

Punctuation (can identify)
- Question mark (?)
- Period (.)
- Comma (,)
- Quotation marks (“”)

Strategies Used
- Relies on memory for reading
- Uses pictures to tell story in own words
- Uses pictures to help with words
- Uses own language patterns
- Uses structured knowledge
- Uses beginning letter sounds
- Uses many letter sounds
- Uses background experience

1990 The Wright Group

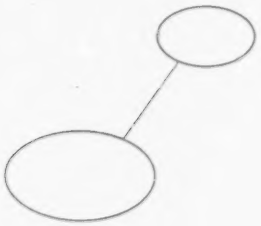
Appendix M
Reading Strategies

1. Activating prior knowledge
2. Predicting what will happen
3. Visualizing what is happening in the story
4. Self-correcting
5. Rereading
6. Using context clues
7. Drawing conclusions
8. Using inferences
9. Identifying the main idea/details
10. Comparing
11. Contrasting
12. Summarizing
13. Use of figurative language
14. Use of multiple meaning words
15. Questioning
16. How is what you are reading similar to real-life?
17. Evaluating/Reflecting
18. Characterization
19. Story mapping
20. Classification
21. Long word decoding

Appendix N
Graphic Organizers

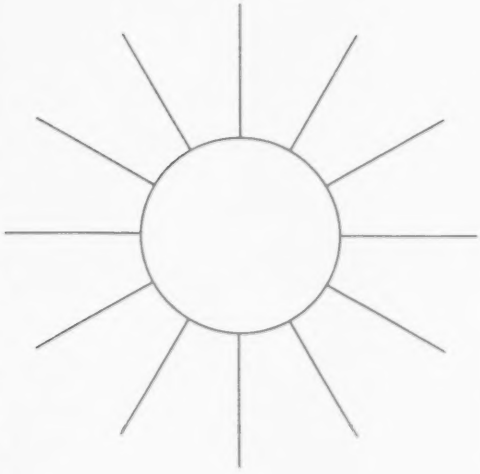
NAME _____ CLASS _____

THE MIND MAP



NAME _____ CLASS _____

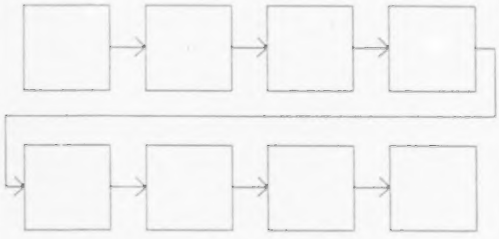
THE WEB



NAME _____ CLASS _____

THE SEQUENCE CHART

Problem



NAME _____ CLASS _____

THE AGREE/DISAGREE CHART

Statement	Before		After	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

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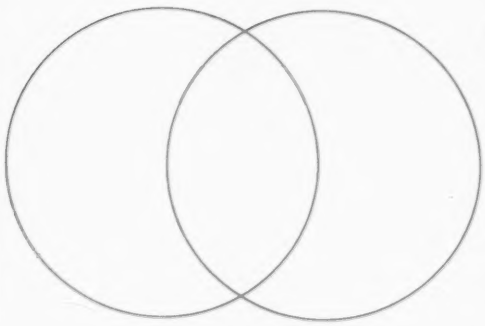
NAME _____ CLASS _____

VENN DIAGRAM



K-W-L

Name of Student:
Date:
Title of Unit:

K What I Know	W What I Want to Know	L What I've Learned

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Appendix O
Listening/Reading/Transfer (LRT) Lesson Outline

1. Reading strategy to be taught is noted.
2. Real world example demonstrated by the teacher.
3. Students listen to literature example and practice skill at various intervals in story.
4. Students read literature examples. Teacher stops at various intervals to practice skill.
5. Discuss strategy for future use in individual reading.

Appendix P
Visualization Techniques

Visualization is the ability to make mental pictures of what you are reading, adding in all the details that the author has not described.

1. Draw
   - Students draw about something that they listened to or read
2. Do a play
3. Act out a story
   - choose a story that students can visualize
   - every student gets a part
   - students may be arranged into several groups
   - each group is responsible for acting out the same story
4. Make a scene
   - students reenact a scene from the story being read
   - keep this short and simple
5. Close eyes and visualize what is being read

Appendix Q
Literature Selections

Title	Author
Site A	
1. The Mouse and the Motorcycle	Beverly Cleary
2. Be a Perfect Person in Just Three Days	Stephen Manes
3. My Teacher is an Alien	Bruce Coville
4. Little House in the Big Woods	Laura Ingalls Wilder
5. Superfudge	Judy Blume
6. Boxcar Children – Woodshed Mystery	Gertrude Chandler Warner
7. Various Basal Reader Stories	Silver, Burdett & Ginn
Site B	
8. 2nd Grade Friends	Miriam Cohen
9. School Days	B.G. Hennessy
10. The Flunking of Joshua T. Bates	Susan Shreve
11. Class Clown	Johanna Hurwitz
12. Horrible Harry in Room 2B	Suzy Kline
13. The Kids in Ms. Coleman's Class	Ann Martin
14. Nate the Great	Marjorie Weinman Sharmat
15. Nate the Great and the Phony Clue	Marjorie Weinman Sharmat
16. Nate the Great and the Lost List	Marjorie Weinman Sharmat
17. Aunt Eater's Mystery Vacation	Doug Cushman
18. Aunt Eater Loves a Mystery	Doug Cushman
19. Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the UFO	David Adler
20. Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Dinosaur Bones	David Adler
21. Rainbow Crow	Retold by Nancy Van Lann
22. The Mud Pony	Caron Lee Cohen
23. Arrow to the Sun	Gerald McDermott
24. Beware of Boys	Tony Blundell

Appendix R
Sample Activities for Letter/Sound Learning

Letter Match. Students are given letters on cards or post-it notes and are asked to match their letter to a letter in a big book or on a chart.

Mask the Letter. Students use envelope windows, fly swatters with holes cut out, or sticky wick strips to mask a letter in a book or on a chart.

Find a Partner. Two students are given the same letter on laminated cards. At a given signal, all students move around the room looking for their partner who has the matching letter. Later, students may be given lower-case and upper-case letters to match.

Playdough Letters. Students are given balls of playdough to form into letters. They start by making snakes and then the snakes are shaped into letters.

Glitter Letters. Students are given tagboard cut-out letters and they cover these with glue and glitter for a sparkly bulletin board or for use in letter activities.

Body Letters. Students work in groups of 3 or 4 to make letters using their bodies.

Hop on Letters. Large plastic letter squares are placed on the floor around the room or in the gym. On a signal, students hop to a letter and then tell the name of their letter. At the next signal, they move to a different letter. They may also skip, run, gallop, or tiptoe to a letter.

Search the Room. Students search around the classroom for a particular letter or any letter they can name.

Search the Hall. Same as Search the Room, but done in the hall.

Search the House. Same as Search the Room, but done at home as a family project.

Sponge Paint Letters. Using large sponge letters, students sponge paint collage posters of letters.

Alpha-Bit Mini Posters. Using any alphabet cereal, students choose letters to glue onto small posters to make a collage or to spell words.

Name Game. Sing or chant the words, "If your name starts with _____, please stand up."

Action Letters. Teach the children an action for each consonant, such as bounce for B. Show a letter and all children do the action, or have individual children choose a card and do the action. Cards may also be used in a "Follow the Leader" game with actions.

Alphabet Line-up. Give each child a laminated alphabet card. The class sings the Alphabet Song slowly as the children line up accordingly to their letter.

Alphabet Song. Have children who know the song teach it to the class. Point to letters of the alphabet as they sing.

Alphabet Books. Read a wide variety of alphabet books to the class. Have the students create their own alphabet books with each child making a picture for 1 or 2 letters

Hickety Pickety. Show alphabet cards in random order as this chant is recited:
Hickety, pickety, bumblebee.
Can you say this letter with me?
B.....B.....
Let's all clap it! B.....B.....
Let's all sing it! B.....B.....
Let's all whisper it! B.....B.....

Appendix S
Sample Activities for Phonological Awareness

Clap out Syllables. Using children's names and other familiar words, the teacher leads students in clapping the number of syllables as they say the words. Compare the number of claps to the length of the same name or word in print.

Nursery Rhymes. Familiar nursery rhymes are taught using books, posters, and charts. Students may say the rhyme, sing it, dramatize it, or pantomime it. The class may be divided in half. One side says the rhyme, but stops at the last word. The other half shouts out the missing word.

Name Games. Use students' names on cards to introduce letter names, concepts of long and short words, beginning consonant sounds, and capital and lower case letters. Display name cards on a bulletin board and let students point to cards and read the names. Use name cards in the Hickety Pickety chant:
Hickety, pickety, bumblebee,
Can you say this name with me?
Darren....Darren.....
Let's all clap it!
Darren.....Darren.....
Let's all sing it!
Darren.....Darren.....
Let's all whisper it!
Darren.....Darren.....

Being the Words. Use a familiar predictable book or a chant, song, or poem written on chart paper. Children are given words on cards. They arrange themselves in the correct order to match one or two lines in the book, poem or chant. Punctuation cards are added. As the teacher points to each child who is standing and holding a word, the seated children read the sentence.

Sorting Words by Length. Students are given word cards with words of varying length. They count the letters in the word and then come to the front as the teacher asks for words with one letter, two letters and so on. Compare the words using terms such as long, short, longer, shorter, longest and shortest.

Sorting Words by Letters. Students are given word cards of familiar words. They bring them to the front and make a tally mark on an alphabet chart when the word contains a certain letter. If the word contains two or more of that letter, the student makes the appropriate number of tally marks. Graph the number of times each letter appears.

Beginning Sounds. Favorite words with pure initial sounds may be used as key words to determine initial consonant sounds of other words, for example, "f" is for "fox".

Appendix T
Sample Activities for Word Recognition and Patterns Lessons

Name Board. Students' names printed on colorful cards are added daily to a bulletin board. Each day the names are read together and later individually. The board remains in the writing area for students to use in writing notes or stories about classmates.

Mini Puzzles. Simple words with pictures are cut into two-piece puzzles with the beginning consonant only on the left side. Students work alone or with partners to match the puzzle pieces and read the words.

Hop to Words. While music is played, students hop to large laminated word cards placed on the floor around the room. When the music stops, each student stops on a word and reads it to the class. The game may be varied with skipping, tiptoeing or walking backwards.

Word Wheels. Rhyming words are printed on moveable wheels. Only the first letter changes as the wheel is rotated. Students read the rhyming words and then trade wheels with another student. This may be done with partners. One student turns the wheel while the other reads the words.

Body Words. Two or three students are given large cards with one letter on each card. When arranged in the correct order, the letters form a word. Students work together to create a word and read it.

Appendix U
High-Frequency Word Strategies

1. Create a word wall
2. Word wall activities
3. Clap, Chant, and Write
    - The teacher says a new word and uses it in a sentence. The students say each letter of the word and clap once for each letter. They then write the word on their paper. Their words are checked against the correct spelling on the word wall.
4. Review Rhyme with the Word Wall
    - The teacher gives the student the first letter and what the word rhymes with. The students try to figure out the word. (for example, begins with b and rhymes with stack)
5. Review Cross Checking with the Word Wall
    - Students are given a sentence with a word missing. They are read the sentence and need to try and find a word on the word wall that makes sense.
6. Be a Mind Reader
    - Students are given up to 5 clues that describe a word on the word wall. Using these clues, they try to guess what word the teacher is describing.
7. Guess the Covered Word
    - The teacher writes several sentences on the board covering up one of the words. The teacher asks the students to guess the covered up word. These words are written on the board. The teacher uncovers the first letter of the word. Any of the words that do not begin with the same letter are erased. Students are able to make additional guesses. Uncover the word and see if any students guessed the correct word.

Appendix V
Spelling Patterns and Decoding Strategies

Spelling Patterns

1. The sounds /e/ and /a/
2. The sounds long "i" and long "o"
3. Words ending with "ed" and "ing"
4. The sounds /k/, /f/, /z/
5. Double letter words
6. Consonant digraphs
7. Adding "ed", "ing", "er", and "est"
8. The sounds /oi/ and /ou/
9. The sounds /oo/ and /yoo/
10. The sounds /ar/, /or/, and /ar/
11. Syllable patterns

Decoding Strategies

1. Word Walls A list of commonly misspelled words posted in the classroom.

2. Using Words You Know Association of unknown words with words previously learned.

3. Making Words Students manipulate letters to make new or unknown words.

4. Big Word Boards A board in the classroom is reserved for difficult or unusual words that students may encounter during a specific unit of study.

5. Long-word Decoding Students break an unknown word into smaller chunks and/or look for known word parts.

6. "The Nifty, Thrifty-Fifty" (Cunningham & Hall, 1998) Fifty words that help students decode, spell and build meaning for thousands of other words.

7. "The Wheel" Similar to the game show "Wheel of Fortune", students take turns guessing the missing letters in a word.

Appendix W
Sample Activities to Increase World and Word Knowledge

Field Trips.
Farm park
Zoo
Nature center
Apple orchard
Grocery store
Hea[illegible]nter
Pla[illegible]

Vide[illegible]

Speakers.

Real Things Brought into Classroom.
Apples of different types
Leaves
Nuts
Bark
Logs
Rocks
Shells
Stuffed pheasant
Vegetables
Fruit
Empty food boxes and cans
Health items (toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, brush, nail file, nail clippers, soap, shampoo, scales)

Appendix X
Word/World Knowledge Activities

Make informational resources the main component of instruction

- Read from informational books.
- Provide a variety of informational books and magazines.
- Plan units and author studies around the informational genre.
- Provide variety of print material in the classroom.

Use What You Know

- Utilize "best practices" of reading instruction during all areas of the curriculum especially during science and social science units of study.

Field Trips

Bring real things into the classroom related to the various study topics.

Scavenger Hunt:

- Students are asked to bring in their own objects related to a specific topic. These are then shared with the class.

Appendix Y
Parent Letter about Emergent Reading Books

Dear Parents,

Today your child is bringing home a small book to read to at least 3 people at home. We have enjoyed reading it at school. Please take time to listen and do the following:

- Have your child point to each word as he says the word.
- Have your child point to letters and give beginning sounds.
- Talk about periods, question marks, and exclamation points.
- Encourage smooth reading with expression.

The book needs to come back to school **tomorrow** in the plastic bag with your signature on this note. Thanks for encouraging your young reader.

Mrs. Reynen

Appendix Z
Basic Sight Word List

Sight B Post Intervention

the	of	and	a	to	in	is
you	that	it	he	was	for	on
are	as	with	his	they	I	at
be	this	have	from	or	one	had
by	words	but	not	what	all	were
we	when	your	can	said	there	use
an	each	which	she	do	how	their
if	will	up	other	about	out	many
then	them	these	so	some	her	would
make	like	him	into	time	has	look
two	more	write	go	see	number	no
way	could	people	my	than	first	water
been	called	who	oil	its	now	find
long	down	day	did	get	come	made
may	part	over	new	sound	take	only
little	work	know	place	years	live	me
back	give	most	very	after	things	our
just	name	good	sentence	man	think	say
great	where	help	through	much	before	line
right	too	means				